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# REFLECTIONS

U P O N

## Accuracy of Style.

In FIVE DIALOGUES.

C O N T A I N I N G

The Chief Rules to be observed  
for obtaining an Accurate  
Style.

Of the too frequent Use of *Antitheses*.

Of the Use of *Metaphors*.

Of Affectation in Style.

Of Flashy Styles.

Of the Use of Foreign Words.

Of the Laconick Style.

Of the Long Style.

Of Novelty of Style.

Of Poetical Expressions used in  
Prose.

Of the Use of Obsolete Words.

*Rapin's* Rules of Style.

Of Obscurity in Writing.

On Harmony of Sound.

*French* Writers not a Rule in  
other Languages.

Vogue not always a sure Proof  
of a good Writer.

Of the Beauties and Blemishes in  
the Style of the late famous  
Mr. COLLIER.

Of that Gentleman's Oddness of  
Expression, Metaphors, &c.

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With Brief OBSERVATIONS interspersed thro' the Whole, on

ARISTOTLE,

TASSO,

MILTON,

LONGINUS,

BOILEAU,

COWLEY,

QUINTILIAN,

BOUHOURS,

SPRAT,

CICERO,

RAPIN,

DENHAM,

TACITUS,

VOITURE,

DRYDEN, &c.

And many other Curious Particulars referred to in the INDEX.

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By Mr. JOHN CONSTABLE, *A*  
*Author of the Conversation of Gentlemen, &c.*

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The SECOND EDITION.

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T H E

# P R E F A C E.

A Long and uniform discourse, with a series of abstract *Rules*, soon tires and fatigues the Reader. Especially if you add the frequent *Definitions*, *Divisions*, and Terms of *Art*, which have naturally place in such a discourse ; and above all, the tedious Accuracy of *Analytical* Tables, and the like *Schemes*. A meer distinction of Chapters serves but little in so dry a method of reasoning, and does not sufficiently unbend the application. The Reader is apt to be dissatisfied with hearing

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the *Author* talk all alone. Whereas it has been justly observed by many, that in *Dialogues* he imagines himself to share in the conversation. He takes up with one side or other, and is glad to meet the answers he had already given in his own thoughts, and to find them approv'd by the *Author*: Or where he is in a different opinion from him, he is either willing to be civilly disabused by one who seems rather to converse with him, than to pretend to teach him: Or he is pleased to look upon himself as judge between two contending parties.

NOT only these and the like reasons, but the real occasion of the following *Reflections*, determined me to write them by way of *Dialogue*. They were really occasion'd by conversation with one, who seemed to me too universal an admirer of a book written by an Author whom I shall



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shall call by the name of *Callicrates*. I thereupon began to examine several of his periods, and the nature of his *Style*. Thence I enter'd into farther *Reflections* upon the *Art of Writing*, or *Accuracy of Style*, confirming my opinion with *Instances* and *Instructions* from several Authors, and endeavouring to make the matter less tedious, by several little passages and applications from *History* and *Erudition*.

I AM sensible that as it is no sign of *courage* to be *quarrelsome*, so, according to a hint of Mr. Cowley<sup>a</sup> it is no sign of *wit* to be *critical*, in the modern sense of the word. A *Reflection* too of *Rapin*, makes me fear that mine will not be so easily justified in the rest, as in the method and manner of writing of them. This judicious Author observes<sup>b</sup>, that

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<sup>a</sup> Preface to his Comedy.

<sup>b</sup> *Refl. Poet.* 28.

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*Flattery* is odious to the Publick by too great a desire of pleasing particulars; and on the contrary, *Satyr* displeases particulars by too great a desire of pleasing the Publick. The same often happens in *Criticisms*. And altho' a *Satyrift* and a *Critick* are very different in their true *Characters*, their *Fate*, as the world goes, is commonly much the same. I must therefore desire the Reader to be so just as to believe me; not Criticism, but meerly my own Improvement, was my design in the following remarks. I writ them only by way of private exercise, that whilst I was employ'd in the study of foreign languages, I might not totally forget my own. And as they were first made without the least offensive design, I desire they may be as unoffensive in their publick appearance.

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I WOULD by no means be misunderstood by these Remarks, to rank *Callicrates* among common Authors. On the contrary, I shall always own he is in several respects justly to be placed among the best. Upon this account I give the Author, whose Book was the occasion of several of my Remarks, the name of *Callicrates*, which from the *Greek*, and in my opinion of him, will import, that whatever I may dislike in his Style, I look upon him to write with a great deal both of *Beauty* and *Strength*.

SOME will still know his true name, but many will not. And those who do, will see I have taken this expedient out of respect to him, and with a tender apprehension of being offensive. Nor do I imagine an Author, who finds one has so great a regard for his merit, can  
A 4 justly



justly resent the finding some fault with his Style: Especially since it was not choice, but merely accident, that brought it into my Reflections; and wherein I am not conscious that any less civil terms have slipped even from my youthful pen. I hope, therefore, to be excused, if in this I cannot think him a perfect pattern. As he has several places almost inimitable; so several, I think, ought not to be imitated. And even in those I wou'd apply to him what *Paterculus*<sup>c</sup> says of *Cinna*, *ausum eum, quæ nemo auderet bonus; perfecisse quæ a nullo nisi fortissimo perfici possent*. As no perfect Author wou'd give some of his bold strokes of the pen, so nothing under an eminent wit cou'd perform so strongly. Nor does it follow, that I neither see nor will own his graces, because I venture to say he has failings. *La*

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<sup>c</sup> *Lib. 2. aliquantò post initium.*

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*Bruyere*<sup>a</sup> says, the *Cid* is one of the best poems that can be made, and yet that one of the best *Criticisms* that was ever made upon any subject, is that upon the *Cid*. Thus a work, tho' highly valuable, may give just reason of censure. And tho' I am very conscious my Remarks will be far from deserving the character given to those upon the *Cid*, yet I shall not disallow but *Callicrates's* book may, in its kind, be as commendable as that famous *Tragedy*.

I N writing these Papers, I soon found the Nature of my Subject suggested several Reflections, which some Readers wou'd certainly think stolen, if I did not own they were borrowed. This was in great part the reason of my adding the abstract of several places of *Quintilian*, at the end of the Dialogues. I

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<sup>a</sup> *Mœurs de ce siècle.*

have,

## The P R E F A C E.

have, upon the same account, been exact in other citations: perhaps to a degree of scruple. Some Authors multiply them too much, by an affectation of memory and great reading. Others avoid all, that every thing they say may seem their own. *Epicurus* is said to have writ three hundred books without one citation. And I know some who are strangely pleased with *Osborn*, where he says, *Quotations are like sugar in wine: If the wine is good, its taste is spoiled by the sugar; if the wine is bad, it spoils the sugar.*

I SHALL not deny but long and frequent citations interrupt too much, and so are apt to spoil the true taste of a Style. Yet if commonly short, and properly used, I must beg leave to disallow the force of this sweet comparison. And I suppose they

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\* Advice to a Son. Sec. I. §. 14.



will grant it does not hold in *Rhenish* wines. Besides that in a subject of this nature, they are not only excusable, but in a manner necessary, both as to the rules of the best masters of the *Art*, and as to examples of both true and false eloquence. Without examples, *abstract Rules* wou'd scarce be perfectly understood ; and it would be presumptuous in a private Author, to be giving rules without the support of authority. However, I have cast most of the *Latin Citations* into the margin : Such as remain in the context in that and other languages, need not frighten those who only know *English*. For they are either literally or equivalently translated in the series of the discourse.

THO' I have had far the greatest part of these papers by me twice the time prescribed by *Horace*<sup>f</sup>, yet I

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<sup>f</sup> *Nonnumque prematur in annum. De Arte Poet.*

have

have wanted both inclination and leisure to polish them. Otherwise, besides several corrections, I wou'd willingly have graced them with some places of modern writings ; for observing the graces of the best Authors, is the best of Criticisms, and the best of Rules. In particular, I would have used such as the excellent discourses upon *wit*, and *the pleasures of imagination*, in the *Spectator*, and Mr. *Pope's* discourses upon *Homer*, in which his prose is no less admirable and harmonious than his verse. His *Art of Criticism* I was hinder'd from using by another reason. For since to make a less tedious variety in explaining quotations from Authors, having occasionally made use of some parts of a hasty and youthful translation I made of the two first *Canto's* of *Boileau's Art of Poetry*, and of some other verses out of *Latin* and other languages ; I easily saw mine wou'd appear insupportably mean

mean in so near a view with his ; and moreover, I knew not where to fix in particular, in an Author where every thing seem'd excellent. Thus was I to omit what I admire beyond expression. I must add, I am sensible several of the verses are so loose and feeble, that nothing can excuse them, but that I give them not for Poetry, but to explain the quotations from foreign languages.

I HAVE often insisted upon the false value of the short and smart, the gay and *metaphorical* Style, and urged the necessity of being exact and *accurate* ; and consequently inculcated the mistake of those, who under a very ungrounded pretence of writing to the humour of the Age, and of a great and free air in expression and thought, write in a new set of words and phrases, which make it doubtful what language they write in ; and for fear of *Pedantry*,  
neglect



neglect all *Accuracy* and *Rule*. Such vicious methods are so far from being the humour of the age, that there is as good a goût and manner of writing in this age and nation as in any. Nor do I think I am capable, or that there is any need of correcting the general taste of the Age, but of those who would cover their private errors, with a false pretence of publick liking. This, together with the affinity of some rules of *Style* with others, and the natural freedom of *Dialogues*, will excuse, I hope, such places as may seem to be like repetitions of what was said before.

To mention under what disadvantage of youth, place, and other studies, I writ these Reflections at broken intervals; and how I came to publish them now; wou'd, I fear, serve for a very small apology: I shall therefore forbear to trouble  
you

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you with an excuse from those and other motives, and leave the whole matter to those Readers, who, like sociable friendly guests, can be contented with a frugal entertainment, without any haughty comparisons of me with themselves. For thus I explain or apply the words of *Juvenal* :

----- *Superbum*  
*Convivam caveo qui me sibi comparat,*  
    & *res*  
*Despicit exiguas.*

BUT to conclude this Preface, which is running too great a length, I will only add, that I am very far from imagining I have either fully complied with the precepts, or avoided the faults I have observed in others. We often, no less in writing than in morals, see what ought to

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‡ *Sat. II. ver. 129.*

be

be done, while in these we will not, and in those we cannot perform it ourselves. And in fine, I have in this kind what *Cicero*<sup>h</sup> calls so unsatisfiable an ear, that it always desires, even where it's pleased the most, something still more perfect.

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<sup>h</sup> *Non assequimur, at quid deceat videmus: nec enim nunc de nobis, sed de re dicimus: In quo tantum abest ut nostra miremur, ut usque eò difficiles & morosi simus, ut nobis non satisfaciat ipse Demosthenes: qui quanquam unus eminet inter omnes in omni genere dicendi, non tamen semper implet aures meas; ita sunt avidæ & capaces, & semper aliquid immensum, infinitumque desiderant. In Oratore, paulo ante medium.*

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THE  
FIRST DIALOGUE,

BETWEEN

EUDOXUS *and* CLEANDER.

EUDOXUS. **W**ELL, *Cleander*, upon  
your recommendation  
I have read over the  
Book of *Callicrates*.

CLEANDER. Perhaps then we shall soon  
have your name in Print, with an attempt  
at his excellent Style.

EUDOX. Pardon me, Sir, Had I any  
thoughts of being an Author, I shou'd be  
very far from making him my pattern.

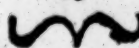
CLEAND. May be you admire him so  
much, that you think him beyond imita-  
tion: And that, I assure you, is the opinion  
of most who read him.

B

EUDOX.

DIAL.

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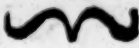
 EUDOX. At least I must beg leave to declare it is not mine. I will own his Style may be much wonder'd at, but I am not so much for admiring it.

CLEAND. Why, what difference do you make here between wondring and admiring?

EUDOX. I am not for disputing upon words. But, methinks, we wonder at any thing which is strange, tho' we properly only admire what has some extraordinary perfection.

CLEAND. I perceive *Callicrates* has had the misfortune to fall into your hands at a bad conjuncture, and to find you in a critical, and, I fear, an exceptious humour.

EUDOX. By no means. I shall not question but difference of humour may very much influence the judgment: But, you may believe me, I began to read him with a very favourable prevention. Tho', to be plain, I am never so prevail'd upon by the reputation of an Author, as not to retain the liberty of my opinion. As I love to see with my own eyes, so I am for judging by my own reason. And what inclines me to a greater freedom in this point, is, that I suppose whoever appears in print, to re-  
compense

compense the pains we take in perusing his DIAL. work, will allow us the freedom of our I. judgment; and putting himself into the hands of all, he must expect to fall under the censure of some. 

CLEAND. Are you resolved then to censure *Callicrates*, in spite of his numerous admirers?

EUDOX. He may justly have many admirers in other respects, but I believe his Style is disliked by great numbers. However, granting what you are pleased to believe, yet if I were so disposed, I could perhaps give many reasons to justify my resolution. Tho', I confess, it is hard to hold up against the common consent.

CLEAND. Not hard only, but rash too, and apt to expose one to publick laughter. It is never thought any great commendation to disagree from all the world besides; and the name of a *Dissenter* in matters of this nature, lies heavier upon a man's reputation than it does now-a-days among us in point of *Religion*. You remember too what we lately read together in *Pliny's Epistles*<sup>a</sup>, *In numero ipso est quoddam magnum collatumque consilium: quibusque singulis iudicii parum, omnibus plurimum.* This applied

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<sup>a</sup> Lib. 7. Epist. 17.



DIAL. to our case will prove, that where each particular judgment might be suspected, the  
 I. common judgment of many upon an Author's performance, is almost irrefragable.

EUDOX. Some are of opinion that *Pliny* often speaks in sentences which are rather pretty than true. Whether this is one of those places, let others judge. Nay, were the matter to be decided by his authority, I fancy I could make that very *Epistle* stand for me.

CLEAND. Thus it is; now-a-days we make Authors say what we please. But what do you answer to the argument I pretend to draw from the common approbation?

EUDOX. If that is your only or your best argument, *Callicrates* will not be much obliged to you for your defence. For what if I shou'd answer by applying what *Pliny* says of *Orators*<sup>b</sup>, *Scito eum pessimè dicere qui probabitur maximè*; and then back it with an odd saying of *Sir Roger L'Estrange*<sup>c</sup>, that *an universal applause is at least two thirds of a scandal*. Which saying, *Callicrates* has borrow'd without telling us so: and he adds, *A man may almost swear he is in the wrong, when he is generally cry'd*

<sup>b</sup> Lib. 2. Epist. 14.

<sup>c</sup> Postscript to *Seneca's* *Morals*.

*up.* And more to the same purpose; and in DIAL. the same tune with him<sup>d</sup> who tells us, *tho'* I. *the multitude has ever been allow'd many heads, it was never allow'd any brains.* However, tho' the common consent is often of great moment, yet never less than in the repute of some certain *Authors*. Unless too that general consent prove constant, it will signify but little in whatever matter. Tho' all the world shou'd commend a book to-day, if they cry'd it down again to-morrow, I suppose you wou'd not rely much upon the commendation. Now, without being the son of a prophet, I dare say the reputation of *Callicrates* will soon be considerably abated. And then, Sir, I will tell you, Time is a better judge of Authors, than a sudden repute.

CLEAND. Time, doubtless, is the better judge, because the more mature : But what reason have you to think *Callicrates's* reputation will not be permanent ?

EUDOX. My reason in part is, that seeing the applause some Authors had formerly, who are now but little esteem'd, and finding, as I think, somewhat of their character in his Style, I may have reason to conjecture from them, of him. Now, *Cleander*, that some Authors have fallen so con-

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<sup>d</sup> *Religio Stoici.*

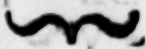
DIAL. siderably from their first vogue, is what you cannot but have observed. I could instance the matter in some of our own nation: But since you are a great admirer of *French* Writers, I will do it in some of them. Take for example the Gentlemen of *Port-Royal*. Certainly you perceive they are far from having now the mighty vogue, they had some years ago. Then all their works were cried up for master-pieces. Nothing cou'd be more eloquent and polite. But not long after the world took them in another prospect, and grew weary of their frequent *Parentheses*, which clog a discourse and make it languid and unintelligible. Their long *Periods* grew tedious, and were found to be, not so much the effects of an abundance of sense, as a want of that exactness of thought, that just dimension and extent of parts, which makes the lasting beauty of Styles; while, as *Aristotle* observes\*, if they are too long, they tire out the Reader; and if too short, they hurry him along too fast.

CLEAND. But hold, Sir. Supposing those Gentlemen as much fallen as you think, from the common esteem, yet certainly you cou'd not have pitched upon any writers less proper for your purpose, or farther from the character of him you censure. For my

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\* Rhet. l. 3. cap. 9.



part, I find his Style convenient for short DIAL:  
Lungs; and methinks, of all things, you I.  
cannot complain his Periods put you out of breath. 

EUDOX. They seem indeed to be generally made in favour of Readers that are troubled with an *Asthma*; and I fear, his are as much too short, as those others are too long. And yet the perfection of a *Style*, as of all other things, consists in a *Medium*. As for the likeness I pretend is in both, it consists in the novelty of their Styles, and the lastingness of their Vogue. Their way of writing was as new once, as his now; and perhaps an appearance of novelty will be found the great, but weak support of both.

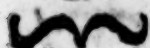
CLEAND. Why indeed there is nothing so old, but it once was new. So that, methinks, you will have nothing esteem'd, because its credit must have a beginning. Which is an injustice, you know, made *Horace* lose his temper, and wou'd vex many a less cholerick man<sup>f</sup>.

EUDOX. All I pretend, is, that a man's rising credit, to be truly valuable, must have

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<sup>f</sup> *Indignor quidquam reprehendi non quia crasse compositum, illepidè ve putetur, sed quia nuper.* Lib. 2. Epist. 2.

DIAL. some other support besides the novelty of  
I. his performance.



CLEAND. Now then *Callicrates's* way of writing, is not only new and peculiar to himself, but there is an admirable strength in his expressions. His thoughts seem to be properly his own, and to flow from an extraordinary elevation of wit. Every sentence seems to be full of sense, and the second still more surprizing than the first.

EUDOX. Just as I thought. His flashing expressions have surprized you too much to give you the leisure of an examination of them. Those concise Sentences, those short Cuts, those continual Metaphors, and that which I call the *Tic-Tac*, of an *Antithesis*, strikes indeed at first, but will seldom bear the test of a reflection. Oftentimes you find those turns of expression and thought, as *Quintilian*<sup>s</sup> observes, are ridiculous when examin'd, tho' at first they pleased extremely, and seem'd wondrous witty. I cannot but think a second reading will much abate your opinion in this matter, and that a third will bring you over to mine.

CLEAND. Here you are at Prophecies again.

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<sup>s</sup> *Excussa risum habent; inventa, facie ingenii blandiuntur.*  
l. 8. cap. 5.

EUDOX. All this prophesying consists only in drawing a natural inference from past experience. You know how much you admired at first *Lipsius's* hopping style: yet, as I told you then, you soon changed your opinion, and with a great deal of reason. For tho' I always admired *Lipsius* upon many accounts, yet never, I can assure you, for his Style. Now, methinks, the *English* of *Callicrates* is something like *Lipsius's Latin*.

CLEAND. I must confess the very comparison staggers me a little. But something, Sir, must be allowed to the particular genius of every language; and a way of writing that will not agree so well with the *Latin* tongue, may yet run prettily in *English*. For *Latin* being more regular and majestick, seems to require a graver pace, and cannot be allowed that freedom which the very irregularity of our language seems to give us.

EUDOX. A great deal must certainly be granted to the Genius of a Language, which is as different in every nation as their way of government. But as common sense is every where the same, and what is reason in *English*, will be reason in *Latin* too; so in the very way of writing, there is something both pleasing and necessary in every language; there is something common,



DIAL. mon, which runs through all and every

I. one, not excluded by any particularity of  
 ~~~~~ Genius, but universally requisite. And this  
 I take to be that equality of Style, that  
 exactness which must be observed, as well  
 in propriety of expression, as in the pro-  
 portion of the thoughts. For my part, I  
 could never admire those writings where  
 every other sentence seems to be a different  
 piece: <sup>h</sup> where the expression is perpetu-  
 ally forc'd from a metaphor; where every  
 now and then one meets with those sen-  
 tences and thoughts, which, as <sup>i</sup> *Quintilian*  
 says, wou'd not look so great, but that  
 every thing round 'em is mean. And in-  
 deed they look staringly on it, as if they  
 wonder'd to find themselves out of their  
 place, and in the midst of others of a lower  
 size.

CLEAND. Wou'd you then have an Au-  
 thor always creep for fear of soaring too  
 high? If a man were not allowed some-  
 times to raise both his thoughts and ex-  
 pressions, we shou'd take but little satis-  
 faction in reading. I love to meet in an  
 Author a certain noble air, that cannot  
 endure a servile subjection to such rules and  
 precepts, as make the work rather mean  
 than exact. *Cicero*, I suppose, is a good

<sup>h</sup> *Sit quidvis simplex duntaxat & unum.* Hor. Art. Poet.

<sup>i</sup> *Sententia ipsa, quas solas petunt, magis eminent quam omnia circa illas sordida & abjecta sunt.* Lib. 2. Cap. 12.

judge in the matter. And I remember he DIAL. says, a well-understood negligence is better I. than an affected accuracy<sup>k</sup>. I will even venture to say, that nothing is less exact, than what is always so. None are less pleasing than your artificial Authors. Much after the same manner, in one sense, (if you will give me leave to make so odd a comparison) as *Martial* says, no one smells worse than he that is always perfumed<sup>l</sup>. Is it not better too, to venture now and then at some noble folly of wit, than always to creep sneakingly along for fear of out-walking your rules? or, as *Quintilian* has it<sup>m</sup>, to lie always flat, for fear of a fall. In a word, I had rather be witty with hazard, than insipid by art.

EUDOX. So I perceive you are as fond of freedom in your thoughts, as *Libertines* are in their manners. However, Sir, (to use *Callicrates's* phrase) *not to cramp your fancy and cut the sinews of your eloquence*, take if you please a liberty, but let it be reasonable<sup>n</sup>. A free easy air and carriage is extremely taking; but it degenerates into ridiculousness, when it is foppish and

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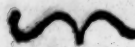
<sup>k</sup> *Quadam etiam negligentia est diligens.* De Orat. l. 3. post medium.

<sup>l</sup> *Posthume non benè olet, qui benè semper olet.*

<sup>m</sup> *Dum timent ne aliquando cadant, semper jacent.* Lib. 8. cap. 5.

<sup>n</sup> *Dabiturque licentia sumpta pudenter.* Hor. Art. Poët. flaunting.

DIAL. flaunting. The like happens in Styles; and

I.  moreover, those noble authors, as you call them, often give their notions so rambling a liberty, that it leads to extravagance. But remember, that when I speak in terms of this harsh nature, I wou'd by no means have you think I make the application to *Callicrates*. Such general reflections as I have, or may hereafter make, upon false eloquence, though occasion'd by what I may say of him, are not my sentiment of his writing, any farther than I shall expressly make the application. And since you will have my opinion upon the *Art of Writing*, I shall be forced to take a much larger compass than merely what I think may be faulty in him. Let me add then, that *Libertine* and *Rule-Hating Authors* are apt to fall short of common sense, for fear of being reasonable by constraint. Rather than be confined to precepts of art, they follow every rising fancy, and rather chuse to talk non-sense freely, than reason by rule. They run on without order, for fear of seeming slaves to method. They think nothing is great, but what is unconfin'd; nothing easy, but what is loose°. Upon a notion of disengaged thoughts, they rove in a maze of unconnected ideas; and in the wandring fit, lose themselves

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° *Rudia politis majora, & sparsa compositis numerosiora creduntur.* Quint. l. 2. cap. 12.



and their reader. For my part, I cannot imagine, why those should be most admir'd who are most irregular. It is, as *Quintilian* hints, just as if it was more commendable to break a door with violence, than to open it, or to drag rather than lead you<sup>p</sup>. In a word, Libertinism is methinks vicious in Writings as in Morals.

DIAL.  
I.

CLEAND. Severity too is no less to be avoided in both. And as in Morals a *Divine* shou'd neither be lax nor rigid, so in Writings one shou'd neither be scrupulously nice, nor immoderately free. Now I do not think it at all immoderate, to venture upon occasions at a noble flight, to raise a thought above the common pitch, to hazard a new word or expression. *Horace* has pronounced it, that this always was, and ever will be lawful<sup>q</sup>. The same liberty extends to the use of short metaphors, which are as pleasing as they are unexpected; and to that closeness of sentences, that smart conciseness of *Style*, which seems to cut to the quick, and to mean more than is expressed; and, in fine, to that vehemence of *Style* which is the effect of a lively fire and strength of thought.

<sup>p</sup> *Majorem habere vim credunt ea qua non habent artem; ut effringere quàm aperire, rumpere quàm solvere, trahere quàm ducere, putant robustius. Quint. l. 2. cap. 12.*

<sup>q</sup> *Licuit semperque licebit, signatum prasente notâ producere nomen* Art. Poët.

DIAL.

I. EUDOX. But then let not fury and rage pass for vehemence and strength. Some of those pretended strong authors, by the confusion, tumult, and fury of their expressions, can scarce be described in milder terms than these verses of *Milton*:

*Others with vast Typhoean rage more fell,  
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the  
air  
In whirlwind. Hell scarce holds the wild  
uproar<sup>r</sup>.*

At other times, notwithstanding all their seeming flashes and fire of imagination, methinks they are more cold than snow and ice. If I may add an application of what *Milton* says a little after, I will tell you, that near those burning lines,

<sup>r</sup> *A frozen continent  
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual  
storms  
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on  
firm land  
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems  
Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice,  
A gulf profound.*

---

<sup>r</sup> *Paradise Lost. Lib. 2. v. 539.*

<sup>r</sup> *Ibid. v. 587.*

And

And now my hand is in, (tho' I see these DIAL.  
applications are overstretch'd and *hyperbo-* I.  
*lical*, yet because proper to make the mat-  
ter sensible by exaggerating) I will read you  
another place which I apply to these Au-  
thors. For when in their really cold, but  
seemingly- fiery expressions, I meet their  
particular rage of *Antitheses*, I cannot but  
think of these lines in the same book:

\* *Each at the head*  
*Level'd his deadly aim; their fatal hands*  
*No second stroke intend; and such a frown*  
*Each cast at th' other, as when two black*  
*clouds*  
*With heaven's artillery fraught, come rat-*  
*tling on*  
*Over the Caspian, then stand front to front*  
*Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow*  
*To join their dark encounter in mid air.*

CLEAND. Well: never cou'd I imagine  
those places which are so noble in *Milton*,  
cou'd be brought to a subject of this nature,  
and for a description of a fiery *Antithetical*  
Style. Yet I own the method is amusing,  
and I wou'd willingly see if you have still  
any more applications of that kind, which  
may clear your idea of such expressions as  
seem at first so full of a noble fire.

---

\* Ibid. v. 711.



DIAL.

I.

W EUDOX. I will give you only one more. For to multiply them too much, wou'd soon make them tedious. Those expressions, notwithstanding all the seeming lustre, and all the other deceitful appearances they bear at a distance, or sudden view, are of a very different aspect when you draw near. You then find 'em dark, obscure, wild in the boundless extent of their notions. Tho' here and there some glimmerings of light give a pleasing kind of reflection, the body of those *Styles* seems express'd in what *Milton* says of that part of the globe terrestrial, upon which *Satan* descends in the third Book. Here is the place<sup>u</sup>.

*A globe far off*

*It seem'd ; now seems a boundless continent,  
Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of  
night*

*Starless expos'd, and ever threatening storms  
Of Chaos blustering round, inclement sky ;  
Save on that side which from the wall of  
heaven*

*Tho' distant far, some small reflection gains  
Of glimmering air, less vex'd with tempest  
loud.*

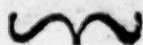
CLEAND. Unless you had taught me to admire *Milton*, I shou'd begin to suspect

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<sup>u</sup> Lib. 3. v. 423.

you design'd a by-ſling at him too, while DIAL.  
you ſeem to aim only at others.

I.



EUDOX. By no means. I am ſtill the ſame admirer of that Poem, in which his uncommon genius cou'd every where ſupport its grandeur; and have only read you thoſe places to enliven our diſcourſe, by deſcriptions of very different objects transfer'd to the matter we are upon. Wherein to proceed; I own I hate to read one that affects, eſpecially in proſe, a grandeur beyond his ſtrength, and ſubject; and will be ſiry beyond reaſon. Even thoſe who have a more than ordinary elevation of wit, ſhou'd be very cautious how far they indulge it, leſt it ſhould raiſe them to a greater fall, as it commonly happens in high and ſudden flights. Let 'em turn to themſelves thoſe verſes of *Taſſo*:

*A i voli troppo alti & repentini  
Sogliono i precipitii eſſer vicini* <sup>u</sup>.

Near flights that are too ſudden and too high,  
The greateſt falls and precipices lie.

CLEAND. Give me leave to tell you, that I fear this caution will, as I told you before, make them always creep for fear of a fall. Too great a fear of falſe eloquence

---

<sup>u</sup> Canto 2. Stan. 7.

DIAL. will be apt to leave us no eloquence at all.

I. I must further beg leave to tell you, that  
 the aversion you express from those who seek elevation of thought, without an anxious regard to rules, puts me in mind of *Marcus Aurelius Severus*. He was so rigorous a lover of justice, that his blood flush'd in his face, and his choler was stirr'd even to vomiting, at the very sight of a corrupt judge. Methinks you are almost as squeamish at the sight of a corrupt style.

EUDOX. That Emperor, Sir, you know was however not cruel, nor ever put any one to death who was not condemn'd by the senate. Thus whatever aversion I may have from corrupt authors, I wou'd not have any of their periods condemn'd, but by the sentence of those judges who make the senate of eloquence; such as *Aristotle*, *Cicero* and *Quintilian*. They, I am sure, will agree, that it is not in vast terms, and rattling words, nor in swelling epithets and bold metaphors, nor in haughty expressions and strutting periods, that true nobleness of *Style* consists: But in a modest grandeur, in a smooth rising of the pen, till it reaches, not till it exceeds the greatness of the thought and subject.

CLEAND. Yet as *Alexander* has gain'd the name of *Great*, though not all his actions can be excused from rashness, and some  
 we



we must own were mean; so a greatness of *Style* may be the proper character of some writers, tho' some of their expressions may fly too high, and others fall too low.

EUDOX. And therefore it is not one or two faults which should degrade an author. But when his ambition and passion generally lead him beyond bounds, when a common violence, and, as it were, tumultuousness of *Style*, makes him infringe establish'd principles of writing, when by a frequent abuse or mistake of wit, or under a popular pretence of writing to the humour of the age, he affects a domineering kind of tyranny in the republic of learning, by open neglect of fundamental laws, he puts me in mind of the *Gracchi*, who, according to the saying of *Velleius Paterculus*<sup>v</sup>, if they wou'd have contented themselves with an honourable share of civil government, might have quietly received from the common-wealth, all they cou'd hope by those tumultuous measures which brought 'em to an end equally miserable and unpitied, notwithstanding their several good qualities.

CLEAND. But still, why shou'd it not be here as in many other things, where we are most pleas'd by the boldest adventures?

---

<sup>v</sup> *Gracchi optimis ingeniis malè usi--- si civilem dignitatis concupissent modum, quidquid tumultuando adipisci gestierunt, quietis obtulisset Respublica. Lib. 2. sub Initium.*

DIAL.

I.

~~~~~ EUDOX. Why, *Cleander*, wou'd you have the pleasure of reading, like that of seeing rope-dancers, where people take a pleasure in seeing men in danger of their lives? And indeed the boldest in both those kinds do generally break their necks at last. I have another odd comparison in my head, that those writers are like bold swimmers. To be able to swim may sometimes save a man in a sudden occasion of danger: But when practised too much, it proves the ruin of many, by encreasing their confidence, and leading them too far out of their depth. Thus the methods I speak of, are sometimes useful, but in the like manner dangerous. Those venturesome gentlemen advance so far, that either the stream grows too strong for 'em, and they are hurried into a gulph, or seized by a cramp, and sink of a sudden.

CLEAND. There is however a strong and elevated way of writing, which exposes not to those fatal dangers. Happy those Authors who can hit it right. They are sure to please by their agreeable unexpected turns.

EUDOX. I fear they are not sure to please beyond the first reading. Those airy turns, which I perceive you admire, may amuse at first, and may pass in a work that is to be laid aside after the first perusal. For  
as

as *Callicrates* observes, if the Sun were not DIAL.  
to rise again, it would look bigger for I.  
him to tumble from the sky at noon with all  
his light and heat about him, than to walk  
equally and smoothly down below the Ho-  
rizon. So one who does not design his  
works for a second reading, may be flashy,  
and full of your surprizes. But if he would  
be often perused, a different method wou'd  
be more sure of success. False gems shine  
bright at first, but a little use decays their  
lustre, and shews what they are. The same  
happens in your unnatural, surprizing Styles.  
Thus a perpetual *Laconism* strikes at first, but  
upon reflection you will find it extremely  
weak. The imagination cannot always keep  
up to that constraint. 'Tis above the capacity  
of man to be always extraordinarily witty, and  
whoever aims at it in every sentence, must  
of necessity fall into affectation, false con-  
ceits, flat and impertinent ideas<sup>w</sup>. Then,  
being ever in search of what *Horace* calls  
*ambitiosa ornamenta*, he will often run to  
those expressions where the words are too  
large for the sense; and by swelling his  
phrases with blustering words, will make  
noise pass for wit; and upon a closer ex-  
amination, you will be so far from true  
wit, that it will be hard to find the sense.

---

<sup>w</sup> Inde minuti corruptique sensiculi & extra rem petiti.  
Hoc quoque accidit quod solas captanti sententias, multas ne-  
cesse est dicere leves, frigidas, ineptas. Neque enim aliter potest  
esse ubi de numero laboratur. Quint. l. 8. cap. 5.



DIAL.

I.

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cesse est dicere leves, frigidas, ineptas. Neque enim aliter potest  
esse ubi de numero laboratur. Quint. l. 8. cap. 5.

DIAL. I shou'd be very sorry to lay this with any  
 I. general charge to *Callicrates's* account :  
 ~~~~~ But when he says that *despair casts a gloominess upon the soul, and lays her in a dungeon beyond the notion of pre-existence*, it sounds, no doubt, extremely high ; yet I fancy you wou'd be puzzled to give a clear and distinct perception of the meaning. If I might express myself in the way of some writers, I wou'd say, *it is all meer gloom and dungeon*.

CLEAND. Tho' now and then you meet with an expression that is too far stretch'd, yet if it is but seldom, the other beauties of the work shou'd attone for a few mistakes. Unless you will be more severe than *Horace* \*.

EUDOX. They may attone for them in part. But still those sort of expressions are so incident to authors who will be ever aiming at your surprizing Style, that this very thing shou'd make that way of writing be less admired, and followed ; and when under high words there comes a mixture of mean thoughts, it gives this kind of Style such an air, as makes it still more insupportable. *Callicrates* is a man of so much sense, that nothing but the misfortune of his way of writing cou'd lead him into something of

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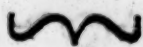
\* *Ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis offendar maculis.* Art. Poët.



this kind. Thus when he says, *'tis better to clap the extinguisher of honour upon our vital flame, rather than to let it burn blue, and lie agonizing in the socket till it goes out in no perfume*; the greatness of the words, with the meanness of the *Image*, makes it doubly absurd. And here I cannot but take notice, that a mistaken greatness and singularity of Style is apt to give their discourses a ridiculous turn, and expose such authors to be ridiculed in the gravest subjects.

DIAL.

I.



CLEAND. There is nothing so serious but a drolling humour may ridicule : And I suppose you will not condemn *Virgil* because he has been travestied.

EUDOX. Tho' any thing may be so represented as to make a ridiculous figure, yet some things there are, which of themselves leave an odd *Idea* in the mind, and need not the help of a Droll, to be smiled at : which *Aristotle*<sup>y</sup> observes to be a great fault, and that it happens when the words are much too mean, or too big for the notion, and subject in hand. Now whoever pretends to be particular in every sentence, and continually runs into unusual comparisons and metaphors, will scarce be able to manage, with all the moderation requisite to maintain the dignity of a sober discourse.

<sup>y</sup> Rhet. l. 3. c. 7.

DIAL.

I.

W CLEAND. As hard as you think it in those methods of writing, not to slip into some expressions which may make one smile in a serious matter, yet what *Calli-crates* has of that nature, rather serves to enliven his discourse, than to impair its vigour. Methinks one must be strangely misliking, not to admire the convincingness of his way of writing, where every word has a particular force, and the following is still a stronger argument than the former. Every thing seems to carry with it a new conviction, and will make you assent to his opinion, though you smile at the expression,

EUDOX. Perhaps you do not sufficiently distinguish between the surprize and the conviction of his arguments. Upon reflection you will often find the singularity of the turn is what you took for the solidity of a proof. He says, *he finds the satisfaction of a Prospect, Musick or Perfume is not thinner for being beaten.* Though I never tried the experiment in a mortar, nor put 'em to the proof of a pestle, I wou'd not swear the same of his reasons. As when he tells us, *if we wou'd only conquer our imagination, we might die easier of a faggot than of a fever;* and then proves it, *because 'tis better to have a fire kindled without than within us.* I fear there is no need of putting such arguments to a beating,

beating, to make 'em thinner. However, DIAL.  
 tho' this convinces me not, yet I am alto- I.  
 gether of his opinion when he gravely af-  
 firms, that *by running in the dark a man*  
*may happen to juggle a post.* I agree with  
 him too, 'tis more probable a man may bring  
 all his limbs from his bed, than from a  
 town-wall at a brisk attack. Philautus  
 was certainly of this opinion, when he fear'd  
 Tim, if he walk'd behind him, might take  
 a bite at his legs; whereas having but one  
 body, he desired to carry it all home, and  
 to continue the experiment of how long  
 a carcass, well look'd to, might last. But  
 then again, this very thing makes me not  
 wonder quite so much as I see Callicrates  
 does, *why men don't dance upon the battle-*  
*ments of houses, vault down the monument,*  
*and jump into a furnace for diversion?*  
 Moreover he tells us, when discoursing  
 upon the value of life, that *people are not*  
*so apt to be too big to live, as too little to*  
*die;* which tho' I scarce can say I clearly  
 understand, yet I suppose, to use his terms,  
*it is good husbandry to nurse up the vital*  
*flame as long as the matter will last.* He  
 may declare again if he pleases, that *pea-*  
*ple are imposed upon by words and things*  
*ill join'd together;* they will never believe  
 his paradox, that *a natural death is the most*  
*violent;* nor will he persuade 'em easily  
*to discharge the last pulse in the face of*  
*death to maintain the honour of our species,*  
 be-





odd comparison or metaphor, some remarkable impropriety of expression and thought, the *Author*, not the Reader, must answer for the *Burlesque*. Your *Author*, Sir, observes, that *in violent wishes, the hurry of the pursuit makes but a shuffling pace, and spoils the gracefulness of the motion*. There is an impetuosity and hurry of Style which has much of the like effect. And when he observed that *sometimes a man cracks his conscience, as a horse does his wind by straining up hill*, he might as well have reflected, that sometimes solidity of reason is lost by forcing it too high.

DIAL.

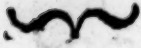
I.

CLEAND. Let me beg of you, Sir, not quite so fast. You begin to declaim somewhat tragically upon the matter. You run on as if you had been prepared for a dispute: I fancy you have been reading some modern criticks, who have put you into this severity of humour.

EUDOX. No, Sir. What I have said, is no more than what the matter itself suggests, and might naturally occur to any one, without the least design of criticism, or ill humour. However, that you may not think I am grown too exceptious; without arguing the case any farther, I will stand to this proposal: If you will take the pains to read over this book a second time, and then tell me, if you do not like it worse;

I

DIAL. I will be bound to read it again my self,  
I. and see if I can like it better.



CLEAND. Agreed. And so for the present I will take my leave : But assure your self I will return again to the charge within some few days.

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THE



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T H E  
SECOND DIALOGUE,  
B E T W E E N  
CLEANDER, EUDOXUS,  
*and* CRITOMACHUS,

CLEAND. **Y**OU see, Sir, I am as good  
as my word in returning  
soon again to the charge.

EUDOX. But, Sir, you never said you  
wou'd bring a second with you; and yet  
by yours and *Critomachus's* smiles, I sus-  
pect that is partly the reason of his com-  
ing. However, his company is always ac-  
ceptable; and I had rather forego the equa-  
lity of the engagement, than want the  
pleasure of his conversation.

CRITOM. Your compliment is obliging,  
tho' almost too ceremonious for friends so  
perfectly acquainted. At least, Sir, to use  
no ceremonies with you, I own you have  
guessed

DIAL. guessed exactly right. Yesterday morning

II. I found *Cleander* reading *Callicrates* with great attention. He presently told me the occasion of it; and finding your late conversation had work'd upon him, I profer'd to undertake the cause.

EUDOX. It seems then, *Cleander*, the second lecture has had the effect I foretold.

CLEAND. I never thought it a point of honour to maintain a mistake, and be stiff in error. I own therefore, I begin to be of a different opinion in the matter.

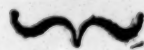
CRITOM. Certainly, *Eudoxus*, you must have argued very closely with him to make so sudden a change.

EUDOX. The only, in a manner, or at least the chief argument I used, was giving a few hints at some of the chief faults, occasioned by affectation of Style, and a presumption, that a second reading, after those hints, wou'd much alter his opinion; and you see I was not much mistaken.

CLEAND. You will give me leave, *Eudoxus*, to tell you, the other reasons you gave, made little impression upon me, till at the second reading I began to observe a certain unnaturalness of Style, which working more upon the imagination than  
reason,

reason, must consequently be less admired the more it is examin'd.

DIAL.  
II.



CRITOM. For my part, often reading such Books has had a very different effect upon me: It has rather increased than diminished my esteem. I still found some new beauty which at first I had overlook'd, and seem'd still to perceive a greater abundance of sense than cou'd be carried away at several readings; which is certainly one of the greatest talents of a writer.

EUDOX. But what if in some writers this vast abundance of sense shou'd at the bottom be only an abundance of new words or phrases, which seem to have a particular meaning, because they are of an extraordinary hue, or combined in a singular way?

CRITOM. No, no, Sir, I do not measure sense by the bigness of words. What I admire is, that vast fund of wit, which is requisite to supply so great a variety of thoughts, as is necessary to carry on that kind of Style. Nor do I mean this of *Callicrates* only, but of others who write in that turn of expression.

EUDOX. And by your leave, Sir, it is just those others, who are in that turn of it, that I chiefly presume to disapprove. For

I



DIAL. I must declare to you, as I have done to  
 II. *Cleander*, that I have much too great a value for *Callicrates*, to charge him with what I say in general of those sort of writers, whose copiousness is often nothing but a repeating of the same thing, in words which differ much more in the sound than in the meaning. 'Tis only multiplying words to the same sense. What was sufficiently expressed in the first period, is varied into several others, 'till at length the thought is so tossed and turned, that it comes to nothing, being smother'd by I know not how many insignificant variations. This *Quintilian* has long since remark'd in that kind of Style<sup>a</sup>.

CRITOM. Why then, *Eudoxus*, do you think those Authors have bewitched us, or so prepossessed us in their favour, that we cannot judge of them with indifference, and see their defects. Having no manner of interest in their reputation, I cannot imagine, what shou'd byass me so far as to forego my reason in their favour and defence.

EUDOX. To be byass'd in favour of an Author, it is not at all necessary to be join'd in one common interest. The very novelty

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<sup>a</sup> Nam & quod rectè dici potest, circumimus amore verborum; & quod satis dictum est repetimus, & quod uno verbo patet, pluribus oneramus: & pleraque significare melius putamus quam dicere. Lib. 8. Proëm.

of his Style (for novelty has a strange attractive) does often please so at the very beginning, that one is apt, upon the prevalence of the first surprize, to take such a liking as makes one think there is something excellent in every extraordinary turn. When once we are thus prejudiced in favour of a book, we read on with a design to admire, rather than examine. The reason is very natural; for when once we are prepossess'd on the favourable side, we think it a reflection upon our wit, not to perceive a great deal, where perhaps the author meant but little. It is what you *Cartesians* object to *Peripateticks*, that doating upon *Aristotle*, they find more in him than ever he thought of: And here by the help of some of those authors you admire<sup>b</sup>, I could read you a long lecture against *Prejudice*, a *Topic* continually handled by some writers, and indeed by most *Innovators*, whether in Philosophy or Religion.

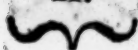
CRITOM. As great an admirer of those writers as you are pleas'd to make me, I still think arguments drawn from prejudice, prove equally on both sides. I am sure at least, they are equally advanced on both, and make little to the purpose on either.

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<sup>b</sup> *Art de Penser, Recherche de la Verité, &c.*

DIAL.

II.



CLEAND. There, *Critomachus*, you will give me leave to interpose my own experience. For though one may be prejudiced as much against, as in favour of an Author, yet, methinks, it is far more natural, to be prevented in favour of one who has the commendation of a surprizing novelty.

CRITOM. I do not love to argue against experience, otherwise I wou'd make bold to tell you, I am of the contrary opinion. I fear we are more apt to censure than to approve other men's undertakings. Those who pretend to have studied the nature of man, tell us, the reason is, that a certain inborn principle of self-esteem, makes us unwilling to acknowledge the perfections of others; imagining our merit diminishes by the increase of theirs.


CLEAND. There may be something of that in people of the same profession, where emulosity inclines 'em to undervalue those who may stand in their light, tho' they will, as *Horace* observes <sup>c</sup>, admire 'em when they are removed out of the way. But where there is no concurrence in the design, there can scarce be any *emulosity*.

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<sup>c</sup> *Urit enim fulgore suo, nam & praegravat artes infra se positas. Extinctus amabitur Idem. Lib. 2. Epist. 1.*

And



And therefore since, as I suppose, neither DIAL.  
you nor I have any design to appear in print, II.  
I do not see what can thus influence our   
judgment of Authors.

**CRITOM.** Alas, Sir, there are few but pretend to be witty, and therefore when they find a contemporary Author begins to have a topping credit, 'tis very natural to be drawing him to a common level. This is certainly the reason we are more inclin'd to criticize modern than antient Authors. Nay, very often we praise the Antients only to spite the Moderns, if you believe *Horace* again<sup>d</sup>. We look upon those as too far off to enter into our concern of reputation: and therefore easily let 'em pass without any envious severity; whilst looking upon these with a nearer eye, we think the distance not so great; but by a little criticism we may make way for a comparison between them and our selves.

**EUDOX.** Prethee, *Critomachus*, don't make such envious creatures of us. As if we could not suffer an Author to rise in the common esteem, without bearing him a grudge! I cannot endure to think man is of so envious an humour. I declare, for my part, I look upon *Callicrates* and *Mon-*

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<sup>d</sup> *Ingeniis non ille favet, plauditque sepulchris, nostra sed impugnat, nos nostraque lividus odit.* Lib. 2. Epist. 2.

DIAL. *taigne* with equal indifference, tho' one is  
II. an extern, and farther off than the other.

~~~~ Nor do I perceive my self the least more  
jealous of the name one has now, and the  
other had a hundred years ago. Why then  
may I not give my opinion equally of both?

CLEAND. 'Tis certainly a little hard to  
think a man envious because he does not  
like every Author that lives at the same  
time. And I suppose, *Critomachus*, you  
will not have every Author claim a right  
to our esteem, and constrain our judgment,  
meerly because he appears in publick while  
we are alive.

CRITOM. By no means. Only I wou'd  
not have us so free in our censures. We  
shou'd encourage witty undertakings, and  
countenance those writers who might other-  
wise be a credit to our age, if they were  
not deterred by the tyranny of criticks.

CLEAND. As for that, Sir, I think few  
Authors are so dastardly as to be hinder'd  
by any such apprehension. The humour  
of printing has now gone so far, that cri-  
ticizing seems only, by scratching, to make  
it itch the more. I wish a more efficacious  
remedy cou'd be found to the disease. But  
I fear the Republick of Learning may say of  
Scriblers, what *Tacitus* does of *Astrologers*,  
that

that they are a sort of men who will be al-ways prohibited, but always continued<sup>e</sup>.

DIAL.  
II.

CRITOM. I must needs grant our age is too licentious in printing. But, I hope, *Cleander*, you are not so suddenly, and so fully changed to a contrary extreme, as to count *Callicrates* among the scriblers.

CLEAND. So far from it, that altho' I do not admire his way of writing so much as I did at first, yet I still place him above vulgar writers ; and I dare say, *Eudoxus* will not deny him the merit of an ingenious Author.

EUDOX. I shou'd be very unjust to refuse him that character ; yet if his wit was in a different turn of expression, I shou'd like it better. The particular jog of his periods, the continual metaphors, and the whole air of his Style, has more of a forced than native lustre. It looks too like painting, which can never equal the charms of a natural beauty. <sup>f</sup> *Quintilian* says, that an effeminate study of beauty is only taking pains to be ugly. Which puts me in mind of what your Author says, that *Authors*,

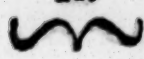
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<sup>e</sup> *Genus hominum potentibus insidum, sperantibus fallax ; quod in civitate nostrâ & vetabitur semper, & retinebitur.* Hist. Lib. 1.

<sup>f</sup> *Eucata muliebriter, fœdissima sunt ipso forma labore.* Lib. 8] Proxm.



DIAL. *like women, dress when they make a visit.*

II.  Now if the dress is too gaudy and whimsical, it will rather expose, than adorn the Lady; and thus, if a Style has too much of the flashy and singular, it will deserve no better success: Especially if the dress and garb is poetical; wherein I cannot say *Callicrates* is faulty. But some there are who fall into it in so putid an excess, as to take a greater licence in multiplied *Epithets*, wild *Hyperboles*, and *Metaphors* as wild, than the maddest inhabitant of *Parnassus*. I wonder the muses do not set some snarling satyrist at their heels, and bark them out of their *verdant meadows all enamel'd with the flow'ry spring*.

CRITOM. However averse I am from too much criticism, I do not design to defend all sorts of writers: and least of all, those poets in prose. You have there, I see, the author of *Human Prudence*. There I lately met with a place of that nature which cannot be excused. Here it is, in the description of *the Grotto*, or a retired life. \* “ Here  
“ I observe, says this Author, the Lady *Flora*,  
“ to cloath our grandam Earth with a new  
“ livery, diaper'd with pleasant flowers,  
“ and chequer'd with delightful objects;  
“ there the pretty songsters of the spring,  
“ with their various musick, seem to wel-

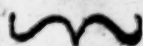
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\* See. 26.

“ come me as I pass along ; the earth puts  
 “ forth her primroses and pretty dayies to  
 “ behold me ; the air blows with gentle  
 “ zephyrs to refresh me ; here I find such  
 “ pleasure with a *gusto relevante*, that I could  
 “ bid adieu to *Alcinous*, *Adonis*, and *Lu-*  
 “ *cullus*’s gardens, and wou’d not envy the  
 “ *Thessalians* for their *Tempe*.” Now, by  
 what way an Author, that can fall into this  
 childishness, cou’d come to a tenth edition,  
 as the title page does here tell us, I cannot  
 imagine.

DIAL.

II.



CLEAND. Certainly, Sir, you must have  
 heard that, notwithstanding *Marcellus* built  
 a Temple to Virtue, and another to Ho-  
 nour, and order’d ’em so, that one could  
 not pass to that of Honour, but through  
 the other of Virtue, yet since his days peo-  
 ple get in another way. That is, honour  
 and reputation are sometimes had without  
 true merit, not only by others, but by Au-  
 thors too. But to let that pass, I believe  
 I can give you here in *Maynwaringe*, <sup>h</sup> such  
 another piece of eloquence as shall outvie  
 your *Grotto*. I will only read you a few  
 lines. Speaking of *sickness and a valetu-*  
*dinary state*, he says thus : “ The lilly and  
 “ the rose, that nature planted in the high-  
 “ est mount, to shew the world her pride  
 “ and glory ; is now blasted and wither’d

<sup>h</sup> His Book of Preservation of Health.

DIAL. " like long-blown flowers. The eye that

II. " flash'd as lightning, is now like the opacous body of a thick cloud ; that roll'd  
 " from east to west swifter than a celestial  
 " orb, is now tired and weary but standing  
 " still ; that penetrated the centre of another microcosm, has lost its planetary  
 " influence, and is become obtuse and  
 " dull. The hollow-sounding breast that  
 " echoed to the chanting bird, and warbled forth delightful tunes, now runs  
 " divisions with coughing strains, and pauses  
 " with a deep-fetch'd sigh for breath to  
 " repeat those notes again, &c." It is hard to say, whether such Styles shou'd be counted Poetry or Prose. But I am sure they are not good Poetry, and are very bad Prose. This amphibious way of writing is neither one nor the other of those two between which there seems no medium ; and perhaps was not thought of when the answer of Sir *H. Savil* or *Spelman* (I forget which of 'em) was thought a very pleasant one, who, being asked his opinion of Poetry, replied, that of all ways of writing he liked it the best next to Prose.

EUDOX. *Aristotle*<sup>i</sup> remarks, that people having observed the very idlest fables of poets did extremely please, by the agreeableness of their expressions, eloquence was

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<sup>i</sup> Rhet. L. 3. c. 1.



at first altogether of a poetical turn, as that of *Gorgias*; and he adds, that the unskilful still thought florid poetical writers the best; but that the mistake is clear from the event, since even poets had moderated that way of expression in *Tragedies*, as very improper in discourse. Upon which he concludes, it is ridiculous to imitate those who themselves no longer use that way of writing<sup>k</sup>. DIAL. II.

CRITOM. What displeases me the most in that kind of Style, is, that it has, as was already observed, rather an effeminate, than a manly beauty. Give me a strong vigorous Style,

EUDOX. As strong as you please, provided it does not, as I cautioned *Cleander*, come to mistaking rage for strength, or to an odd mixture of fierceness, with something of that Poetick way of which we were speaking. Mr. Cowley<sup>l</sup> says of *Virgil*,

*He brought green Poësie to her perfect age,  
And made that Art which was a Rage.*

It looks to me as if some Authors wou'd quite reverse the matter, and make Prose

---

<sup>k</sup> *Quamobrem ridiculum est imitari eos qui ipsi non amplius illo utuntur modo.* Arist. Ibid.

<sup>l</sup> In the first of his Miscellanies.

DIAL, from Art, turn to Rage. An instance of

II. this ranting Style I met with yesterday, at  
 the very opening of this *Religio Stoici*.  
 He begins in these terms. "Albeit man  
 " be but a statue of dust, kneaded with  
 " tears, moved by the hid engines of his  
 " restless passions, a clod of earth which  
 " the shortest fever can burn to ashes, and  
 " the least shower of rheums wash away  
 " to nothing: yet makes he as much noise  
 " in the world, as if both the Globes, those  
 " glorious twins, had been unwomb'd from  
 " that formless Chaos, by the midwifery  
 " of his wit. He speaks thunder, looks  
 " lightnings, breaths storms, and by the  
 " eloquence of his own vanity, persuades  
 " himself that his commands are able to  
 " unhinge the Poles."

CLEAND. Such periods make me think  
 of *Ben. Johnson*, who, as Mr. *Dryden* says,  
 in one of his *Essays*<sup>m</sup>, in reading some of  
 the bombast speeches of *Macbeth*, used to  
 say that it was *Horror*.

EUDOX. The second paragraph of this  
 same book begins little better, tho' with  
 something less terrour. "Albeit regiments  
 " of arguments levied from the stately fa-  
 " brick of heaven's arched pend, and from  
 " the inimitable embroidery of earth's flowry

---

<sup>m</sup> At the end of the Conquest of *Granada*.

"boul,

"boul, &c." You have a world more of DIAL.  
 this sort of eloquence in that rambling II.  
 Stoick. His Style is like his Religion, made  
 up of starts of fancy, libertinism of inco-  
 herent notions, indigested words and ideas.  
 How much better do those write, who,  
 tempering the heat of fancy with cool re-  
 flections upon the rules of art, go smoothly  
 on to their point.

CLEAND. It is doubtless better, as long  
 as too much of art does not destroy nature.  
 Waters are never so good as from the very  
 spring, and we are more pleased with a  
 fountain rising in the midst of its native  
 pebbles, and artless greens, than when it  
 rattles down into a marble basin. I am  
 for *Juvenal's*<sup>n</sup>

*Quanto præstantius esset  
 Numen aquæ viridi si margine clauderet  
 undas  
 Herba, nec ingenuum vitiarent marmora  
 topum.*

And thus, is there not something more  
 pleasing in a free natural vein, than in a  
 constrain'd artificial Style?

EUDOX. But if you observe narrowly,  
 you will find none depart more from na-

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<sup>n</sup> Satyra. 3. ver. 18.



DIAL. ture, than those who take the liberties I  
 II. speak of. Or, if you will have me answer  
 with the words of the same Author, I will  
 affirm, that nature and wisdom, or art,  
 never give opposite rules.

° *Nunquam aliud natura, aliud sapientia  
 dicit.*

And then it will be found, that as waters  
 often grow clearer and better by their  
 course; so natural methods of writing im-  
 prove through a course of Rules.

CRITOM. I am not an enemy to either  
 nature or art. I only fear the criticks will  
 have Authors so nice, as to smooth their  
 Styles into meer flatness. A roughness is  
 better than to have things polished till they  
 are too thin and weak. Amongst the many  
*Jupiters* of antiquity (and you know *Varro*  
 will not compute for less than three hun-  
 dred) one was *Jupiter Philus*, or of friend-  
 ship, and was commonly made with a rough  
 philosophical head. Perhaps, says my An-  
 tiquary, <sup>p</sup> because friendship is oftner found  
 among them, than among sprucer fellows.  
 Thus, methinks, Authors of a rougher mien,  
 are oftner found truer to reason than your  
 trimm'd and smooth-faced Styles.

° Sat. 14. ver. 320.

<sup>p</sup> O. W. of Coins and Medals. Part 2. Chap. 6.

EUDOX. Yet you are not to omit observing, that the very *Jupiter* you speak of, join'd a smiling countenance with his rugged head. From whence I may infer, in the like method, that a true reasonable writer, must not have a frowning look, and that if he must not be gimp, yet he must not be horrid. And if you love *Mythological* applications, I will mind you of the strife between *Neptune* and *Minerva*, which of the two shou'd give the name to *Athens*, which they jointly built. It was in fine agreed, the name shou'd be given by the party that shou'd bestow the better gift upon the new city. Whereupon *Neptune* strikes the earth, and up starts a horse for war. *Minerva* raised an olive-tree. This was judged the better gift, and the town was call'd by her name. Here a thorough-paced *Mythologist* wou'd, I believe, assure you it was to signify, besides many other things, that the smoothness of oil is a better emblem of eloquence (whereof *Athens* was to be the seat) than all the sprightliness of a prancing, foaming horse.

CLEAND. But hold, Sir, I suppose, no farther stress is put upon that kind of *Allegory*, than to give your thought and our discourse, a little variety. For those *Allegories* are very pliable things, and a *Mythologist* of a different temper, or the same in

DIAL. a different humour, wou'd tell you, that

II. *Minerva* her self, the goddess of Eloquence, is represented with a helmet, a spear, and *Medusa's* dreadful head. Very improper emblems of smoothness.

EUDOX. Not only I put no farther stress upon such applications, but even I will own, that upon the whole business of *Mythology*, I am much pleased, but little convinced with all the wit of our admirable *Lord Bacon* upon that subject<sup>a</sup>.

CRITOM. However, it cannot be denied but there is often something very becoming in a manly roughness, and that some Authors in the design'd fierceness of their looks, have a pleasing aspect, as *Tasso*<sup>r</sup> says of *Dorinda*,

*Armò d'orgoglio il bel volto, e si compiacque  
Rigido farlo, e pur rigido piacque.*

With pride and fierceness she her beauty arm'd,  
But in her looks both pride and fierceness  
charm'd.

And to use a different comparison, there is often a hard and rugged Style which includes the most exquisite thoughts, as some fine fruits are within a hard and rugged shell.

<sup>a</sup> Libro de sapientiâ veterum.

<sup>r</sup> Gierusalemme. Canto 2. Stanza 38.



EUDOX. Just, I suppose, as there is sometimes a sharp wit under a thick and hard skull. As I remember to have read in *Janus Nicius Erythræus*, who was pleas'd so to metamorphose his name from *John Victor Rossi*; † that *Nicholas Richardi*, who was counted a very great wit, had a vast head, and so thick a skull, that with one blow he would break peach-stones upon it. Yet this will not make a hard skull pass for a commendation. And though a thin, soft skull, is as little a compliment, yet I have heard of a very tender one that inclosed a sharp and solid wit. And if you are not tired with these kind of applications, I will add, in one more; that fierce, rough, and dreadful writers, put me in mind of the humour of *Bassianus* or *Caracalla* Emperor, who because he was ugly, endeavour'd to make himself terrible. Yet it is related of him, he was so cowardly that he durst not put on true armour, but had his clothes made so like armour, that he was almost thought armed. In this excess of fear, when he pass'd through *Macedonia*, he wou'd imitate *Alexander*, and be call'd *Magnus*, and at *Ilium* he wou'd needs be *Achilles*. Thus, it is often a natural consciousness of a weak reason, that makes many seek to cover it with dreadful words.

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† In his *Pinacotheca*.

DIAL. But then if cowards are never more certainly discover'd at last, than by too great an affectation of *Courage* and *Heroism*, those authors are never more certainly found weak, than by too great an affectation of strength. Methinks I wou'd have such Authors farther imitate *Bassianus*, and stamp their books, as he did his Medals, with a Lyon radiant with thunder in his mouth : And his own medals are observed<sup>\*</sup> to be made frowning.

CLEAND. Or if you will give me leave to put in my thought, I wou'd have in the front of their works, one stand with a most terrible broad-brimm'd hat, and waist-belt, and write under these two verses from the Prologue to the *Conquest of Granada* ;

“ It were a shame an author shou'd be kill'd  
 “ Under the shelter of so broad a shield.

I am the more inclined to this fancy, because if those dreadful Styles shou'd gain repute, we should certainly be forced to apply what follows in that *Prologue*, while thundering large words wou'd increase, as much as the hats, which made him say,

“ The brims still grew with ev'ry play they  
     “ writ,  
 “ And grew so large, they cover'd all the wit.

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<sup>\*</sup> Apud O.W. Part 2. Chap. 13. §. 3.

CRITOM. All your pleasantry upon those terrible authors, may pass if you carry your severity no farther than *Balzac*<sup>u</sup>, who ridicules an over-fierce Pedant, that, as he expresses it, was for breaking guittars and flutes, and wou'd have no musick but drums and trumpets, and have nothing of a milder sound than

*Inferni raptoris equos, afflataque curru  
Sidera Tenario.*

CLEAND. I wonder to hear *Balzac* cited against that sort of writers; for, as far as I remember, he has a rattling kind of a pen.

EUDOX. Yet it cannot be denied but he had many true notions of a smoother and milder strain than his own. To mention no other place of his, you may see it here in a place not far from that mention'd by *Critomachus*; it lately fell into my hands. Speaking of some *Iambicks* made by one *de la Casa*, " I will own (says he <sup>w</sup>) they are not  
" sublime, they have nothing of the tem-  
" pestuous and thundering, as the Pedant  
" calls it. But methinks the Sea in a rage,  
" and the Heavens in a flame, are not the  
" most agreeable objects. Must we not  
" esteem the clearness of fountains, and

<sup>u</sup> Oeuvres Diverses. Entr. 4. Chap. 5.

<sup>w</sup> Ibid. Chap. 8.



DIAL. " the sereneness of a summer's day, because

II. " that Doctor likes nothing but obscurity  
 ~~~~~ " and storms?" Hereupon, if you will give  
 me leave to paraphrase the

*video meliora, proboque,*

*Deteriora sequor,*

of *Ovid*, I will say,

" Thus men in Styles, as in a virtuous  
 " course,

" Approve the better, but embrace the  
 " worse.

CRITOM. Pray, Sir, reach me your *Cowley* there, and I will shew you a place in the preface which will, perhaps, make you abate something of your rigour in these points. Here, speaking of Mr. *Cowley's* verse, " If in some places (says Dr. *Sprat*)  
 " they seem not so smooth as some would  
 " have them, it was his choice, not his  
 " fault. He knew that in diverting mens  
 " minds, there shou'd be the same variety as  
 " in the prospects of their eyes; where a  
 " rock, a precipice, or a rising wave, is  
 " often more delightful than a smooth even  
 " ground, or a calm sea."

EUDOX. Dr. *Sprat* is so good a judge, and himself so good a pattern of Style, (as far as I can guess by that preface, which is the only thing of him I have seen) that I shall not in the least question what he there  
 in-

intends : which amounts to no more, than DIAL.  
that sometimes a variety, even of rougher II.  
numbers, has its proper place; not that  
we are to be pleased with a continual *foam*  
of Style, if I may use the expression.

CRITOM. And on the other side, a writer will be sure to displease, if he goes always on in a hum-drum way, and unless he takes a little scope both in thought and expression.

EUDOX. But still the scope must have it's bounds. Thoughts must agree with one another, and the expression with the subject. Nor must they think the nobleness of a Style consists in the unusual sound of words.

CRITOM. Yet your *Aristotle*, Sir, as you are pleased to call *Cartesius* mine, is far from denying the agreeableness of surprizes which are the natural effect of *metaphors*, *translatitious terms*, *foreign words*, or the use of known words when taken in a different sense than one wou'd have imagined.

EUDOX. I could easily shew that *Aristotle* requires a great moderation in that kind. For although he grants that way of expression is often requisite to make the Style great and noble, yet he is positive that if it is immoderately used, it becomes ri-

DIAL. diculous. And this (which is remarkable)

II. he says speaking of Poetry <sup>x</sup>, where a greater liberty is easily allowed. In his Rhetorick, he not only says those liberties must not be used immoderately, but expressly that they must be taken seldom and in few places, and that *translatitious* terms must not be far-fetch'd, but from objects of a like nature, and which are allyed together, or, as it were, a-kin<sup>y</sup>. In which *Cicero* perfectly agrees with him, and expresses this latter part, by saying that what is called *translation* of terms (that is, transferring them from their proper to another signification) should be very bashful, and seem rather to be led, than to have rush'd in, and to have come rather by intreaty than by violence, or to have begg'd, rather than forced an admittance <sup>z</sup>.

CRITOM. Let not that at least be called forced, which is only carried up equal to the proper force of the thought. Let not things pass for extravagant, because they are extraordinary. Let it be reflected on too,

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<sup>x</sup> *Qui metaphoris & à peregrinâ linguâ petitis vocibus, reliquisque, id genus immodicè utitur, & qui deditâ operâ ut risum moveat, idem effecerit. Poët. cap. 22.*

<sup>y</sup> *Linguis & duplicibus nominibus, & factis, rarè & paucis locis utendum . . . præterea verò non longè oportet, sed ex cognatis & conformibus transferre. Rhet. lib. 3. cap. 2.*

<sup>z</sup> *Etenim verecunda debet esse translatio, ut deducta esse in alienum locum, non irruisse; atque ut precariò non vi venisse videatur. Cic. de Oratore, lib. 3. post medium.*

that



that we are in a strange misliking age, DIAL.  
 which finds fault with every thing ; so that II.  
 there is no way to gain reception in the ~  
 world, but by the commendation of no-  
 velty. And though indeed criticks deserve  
 little regard, yet they have by their num-  
 bers brought a necessity upon authors.  
 They must conform to the prevailing genius  
 of the times, or let writing alone ; for you  
 might as well walk the streets with an old-  
 fashion'd Coat, as appear in print with an  
 antiquated Style : and it were equally ridi-  
 culous to dress and to write as they did in  
 the politest days of our *Edwards*.

EUDOX. It were so. Nor would I have  
 you question but I am of *Favorinus's* opi-  
 nion, who counselled an affected youngster  
 to live like the *Antients*, but to talk like  
*Moderns*<sup>a</sup>. For our language is better,  
 though our morals are worse. When I  
 speak against novelty of Style, I do not  
 mean the language must be as old as  
*Chaucer's*. Though his sense stands good  
 still, (for sense is never out-dated) yet his  
 words do not. These are strangely depen-  
 dent of custom, which has absolute power  
 in the change of language<sup>b</sup>. It is visible in  
*English* and *French*, as we lately observed

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<sup>a</sup> *Vive moribus præteritis, utere verbis præsentibus.* A.  
 Gell. Noct. lib. 1. cap. 20.

<sup>b</sup> *Consuetudo tum omnium domina rerum, tum maxime  
 verborum est.* Idem, lib. 12. cap. 13.

DIAL. in reading together in the country, the

II. second Dialogue between *Ariste* and *Eugene*: whose author, by the by, was very uncivilly used by your friends. Amongst his other enemies, there is in the treatise of *Idleness* <sup>c</sup>, a very cholerick gentlewoman, to whom (as an ingenious friend of mine took notice) the author has given all the wit of the company. She, as far as I can guess, would needs have him hang'd for his grammatical remarks. There is a duller gentleman in the Dialogue, by name *Zeroander*, who proposes a lesser revenge, to which *Angelica* subscribes. However, she is much too angry for her name and character, and I cou'd not but cry out,

*Tantæne animis cælestibus iræ ?*

Can heav'nly minds such angry thoughts contain ?

CRITOM. As I am willing to grant you have a great deal of reason to defend the Critick *Bouhours*, when unjustly and rudely attack'd ; so, dear Sir, a little more impartiality if you please, as to our present subject. You allow words perpetually change, and that the present use is the only rule of language ; and yet you complain of the novelty of authors.

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<sup>c</sup> De la Pareffe, Entr. 2.

EUDOX. Yes, Sir, because their novelty is too singular in its kind. 'Tis true an author's language shou'd be of a fresh stamp, and yet the perfection of his language consists not in an affectation of new words, or an unusual management of terms. Expressions are not better because singular, nor does he write the best *English* that has most words borrow'd from foreign languages or objects, or who phrases his thoughts in the most uncommon turn. The greatest art of expression consists in a judicious choice and application of the most ordinary terms, that where the language is most artificial, there it may appear most natural, because the art is concealed <sup>d</sup>. As art is never greater than when you cannot distinguish it from Nature. Which particularly happens in that certain easy smoothness of writing, where the author seems not to have sought for his expressions, but to have taken them as they flowed in of themselves. You would think nothing could be more easy than to write as they do; nothing however is harder upon the tryal <sup>e</sup>.

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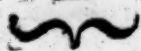
<sup>d</sup> Latere & dissimulari debet ornatus, uti ne conficta, conquisitaque oratio videatur: sed obvia, sed innata, & sed spontè illaboratèque suppetens ... latet autem si lectis è medio atque ex usu communi vocabulis componatur oratio. Arist. Rhet. l. 3. c. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Imitabilis illa quidem videtur esse existimanti, sed nihil est experienti minus, Cic. de Oratore, lib. 3. post medium.



DIAL.

II.



CRITOM. Still methinks that sweet easiness you so much commend, falls not in so naturally with our *English* tongue or humour. At least it is not so great, as that elevated way of writing, that noble air which rises up to the *Sublime* of *Longinus*.

EUDOX. High-sounding expressions are no certain arguments of greatness of thoughts, nor is it a commendation to be great in disproportion. A study'd grandeur of expression is very apt to lead too far, nor is it a less fault to be too high, than too low for the subject<sup>f</sup>. Believe me, Sir, you will find upon examination (and there is a great difference between examining and criticizing) you will find those pregnant fancies often have very odd productions, while the heat of their imagination presses them on so violently that they are seldom exact. If they would take *Horace's* and *Quintilian's* advice<sup>g</sup>, in keeping their works till the warmth of composition is cooler, they wou'd make a considerable change; and looking them over as readers rather than as authors, they would cut off several places, wherein they wou'd find, what I think *Callicrates* calls *monstrosity of thought*.

<sup>f</sup> *Neque humilia neque supra dignitatem elata.* Arist. Rhet. lib. 3. cap. 2.

<sup>g</sup> *Ut refrigerato inventionis amore, diligentius repetitos tanquam lector perpenderet.* Quint. ad Tryph.

CRI-

CRITOM. As for that matter, there is no author so accurate but might change several places, and cut others intirely off. Yet there must, I suppose, be some end of Accuracy as well as of Liberty<sup>h</sup>. To go to that rigour, nothing shou'd be ever publish'd because it may still be mended. Probably also, they wou'd make new faults in correcting the former; and the very anxiety of being exact, would make them most accurately flat<sup>i</sup>. Whereas a certain unconstrain'd freedom, gives a mighty vigour.

CLEAND. I must own I have that notion still hanging upon me, notwithstanding the change I find in these matters. And to tell you the truth, *Eudoxus*, I do not yet well conceive in what the exactness you so much require, nor in what that accuracy you complain is wanting, does consist.

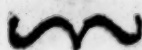
EUDOX. I have already given several hints, examples and authorities, that in part explain in what it does, and many of what it does not consist in. As indeed the most perfect things can hardly be explain'd but by *negatives*. I will add now in short, that it con-

<sup>h</sup> Tamen in hac ipsa cura est aliquid satis. Quint. lib. 8. Proæm.

<sup>i</sup> Quod etiamsi idcirco fieret ut semper optimis uterentur, abominanda tamen hac infelicitas erat qua & cursum dicendi refranat, & calorem cogitationis extinguit morâ & diffidentia. Ibid.

DIAL.

II.



sists in that equality of Style, which every where maintaining it self with a just proportion, seems neither studied nor neglected; and without any scrupulous niceties in the disposition of words, has still that order of them which makes the harmony of a period. They shou'd neither be loose, nor hamper'd as it were, or chain'd up to the laws of verse <sup>k</sup>, as *Cicero* declares. *Aristotle* gives the same rule, and adds the reason why the Style shou'd neither be *metrical* nor void of regular numbers. Because that, says he <sup>l</sup>, makes a Poem of your discourse, and appearing feigned, is less apt to persuade; and moreover distracts your thoughts while it sets you upon an attentive expectation of the like cadence. On the other side, where there is no regard to numbers, the expressions cannot properly be finish'd. You may remember we were lately reading *Isocrates*, and observed that his numbers, though at first so sweet and melodious, began soon to displease, because too constantly falling into the like rolling of sound. On the contrary, a care-

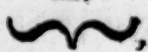
<sup>k</sup> Neque alligata sint certâ aliquâ lege versûs, neque ita soluta ut vagentur. Cic. de Orat. l. 3. p. med.

<sup>l</sup> Formam elocutionis oportet neque metricam esse, neque numerorum expertem. Illud enim minus aptum ad persuadendum, nam esse fictum videtur, & simul avocat. Nam facit ut attendatur quando simile redibit. Quod autem sine numero est, sine termino est . . . . . quâobrem numerum habere oportet orationem, non metrum. Alioquin poema erit neque tamen numeros exquisitos. Arist. Rhet. lib. 3. cap. 8.



less jumbling of words together makes an ungrateful noise and disorder. Then besides: words should come to the ear with a full, but not with a frightful sound. 'Tis true, says *Tully*<sup>m</sup>, harmony of Style cannot be tryed so well by rules of art, as judged of by a kind of natural perception. Yet generally speaking, it is, as I may say, nothing but the hurry of thought which makes the expression unequal. This cannot well choose but be congruous, when that is digested. Where the Idea is accurate, the terms will be so too; and wherever you find the words hobble, you may conclude the notion was lame; otherwise they wou'd both have had an equal and graceful pace. But besides this care of the harmony, a much greater is to be had in the other parts of a judicious accuracy in writing. I will touch upon them rather in another man's words than my own, both because he is counted a very good judge in these matters, and because I despair of expressing what I have meant hitherto by this accuracy, in better or equal terms. Give me leave then to read you a page or two I have here translated from *Rapin's Instructions for History*. For what he applies there to writing of History, is methinks proportionably true in other kinds of writing.

DIAL.  
II.

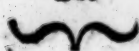



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<sup>m</sup> Non arte aliquâ perpenditur, sed quodam quasi naturali sensu judicatur. Cic. supra.

DIAL.

II.



“ To write sensibly and judiciously,  
 “ says he <sup>n</sup>, is to go on directly to your  
 “ point, in whatever matter, without  
 “ straying aside, or amusing your self in the  
 “ way: It is to deliver things with a kind  
 “ of wisdom and command, which aban-  
 “ dons not it self to the heat of imagina-  
 “ tion or vivacity of wit: It is to know  
 “ how to suppress whatever is superfluous  
 “ in the expression, as are those adverbs  
 “ and epithets, which lessen things by ex-  
 “ aggerating of them: To leave nothing that  
 “ is idle, languishing or useless: To cut  
 “ off generously whatever ought not to be  
 “ said, however beautiful it may seem:  
 “ To give always less to lustre than to so-  
 “ lidity: Not to shew fire and heat, where  
 “ all shou’d be cool and sedate: To examine  
 “ all your thoughts, and measure all your  
 “ words, by that exactness of sense and  
 “ discretion, from which nothing escapes  
 “ which is not accurate and judicious:  
 “ ’Tis, in fine, to be able to resist the  
 “ temptation we naturally have to shew  
 “ our wit; as does that impertinent histo-  
 “ rian, who <sup>o</sup> in the defeat of the *Parthians*  
 “ by the emperor *Severus*, makes *Osroës*  
 “ retire to a grott, shaded with the laurel and  
 “ the myrtle; and striving to be agreeable,  
 “ becomes ridiculous; which is the most

<sup>n</sup> *Rapin Instruct. pour l’Hist. §. 3.*

• *Apud Lucianum de Conscrib. Hist.*

“ slip-

“ slippery place in which an Author can DIAL.  
 “ fall. This sensible and wise character II.  
 “ of wit, is a kind of attention over one’s  
 “ self, which allows of no exaggeration,  
 “ and is upon a constant guard against all  
 “ those bold imaginations, to which your  
 “ flashy and fertile wits are subject ; thus  
 “ dispatching great matters in few words,  
 “ like *Salustius*, who calls councils, gives  
 “ battles, takes towns, subdues kingdoms,  
 “ with a shortness of discourse, and rapi-  
 “ dity of expression which you understand  
 “ by a hint, &c.”

THUS *Rapin* ; and he had cited a little before, a place of *Quintilian* <sup>p</sup>, which comprizes the matter in short, saying : A Style shou’d be great, but not excessive ; sublime, not abrupt ; strong, not rash ; grave, not dull ; gay, not flaunting ; full, but not swell’d.

CRITOM. Now I see you are in the high road of all those nice precepts, which are so admirable in speculation, but can never be brought to practice. If that is the Accuracy you require, I will grant even *Calliocrates* has it not. But then he may still take in with the best Authors. For at that

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<sup>p</sup> *Magna, non nimia ; sublimis, non abrupta ; fortis, non temeraria ; severa, non tristis ; gravis, non tarda ; lata, non luxuriosa ; plena, non tumida.* Quint. lib. 2. cap. 10.



DIAL. severe rate, none of them all can maintain

II. their credit. In earnest, Sir, let me tell  
~~~~~ you, you carry things to a great rigour.

EUDOX. Yet, Sir, I propose no greater exactness than the ablest men have always judged requisite in publick speeches, where the very delivery hides many of the faults. Sure then, it is far more necessary in writings, which want the recommendation of a graceful action, and are read with more reflection than can accompany a speech, where the attention is still carried on without the leisure of an examination. Whence it often happens, that what pleased when first spoken in publick, seems very insipid when read in private.

CRITOM. Orators have indeed the advantage of action, which gives both life and vigour to the composition. And therefore I cou'd never yet see what need there was of being so morosely nice in all those rules and precepts. As for those able men, I am inclined to think they recommended so great an Accuracy, rather to shew how far they pushed their reflections, than that they thought them necessary. Some at least, are so happily born, as to supply, by the native force of wit, whatever want of art; and need not mind those troublesome rules, having from nature all the exactness that one can reasonably desire.

I

EUDOX:

DIAL.  
II.

EUDOX. Alas, Sir, those *happy natiivities* are very rare. They have, says *Quintilian*<sup>a</sup>, many imitators of their negligence and faults, but few equals in their wit. Received customs must be conformed to in life and manners, and if sometimes *Socrates* and *Aristippus* have neglected them, it is not every one, says *Tully*, must take the same liberty. He adds, they might assume that licence which they had gain'd by other great and divine indowments<sup>r</sup>. Thus in expressions, and irregular strokes, a *Horace* or a *Virgil*, a *Cowley* or a *Dryden*, may securely take a freedom which will not be allowable to inferior wits. Yet it shall be these very liberties people will needs be imitating. Thus in *Callicrates* it is, that very turn of expression, which I beg leave to dislike, that will be fondly imitated by many, without his genius to support it. In him it is something genuine, and seems to spring from the root. In others it will be affected. Their short sentences will not shoot out like natural branches, but stick like pieces nailed here and there to a stump of a tree. To my knowledge it has already spoil'd some young men of good hopes. They lose their own growth by

<sup>a</sup> *Plurimos habent similes negligentia sua, paucissimos natura.*  
Quint. lib. 2. cap. 11.

<sup>r</sup> *Magnis enim illi & divinis bonis hanc licentiam assequebantur.* Cic. de officiis, Lib. 1.

DIAL. unsuccessfully grafting from him. 'Twas  
 II. something of this which, as I have read  
 somewhere, made a judicious man say,  
*Voiture* spoilt near half the *French* writers.  
 Those indeed I chiefly speak of, draw nearer  
 to the Style of *Balsac*, which an ingenious  
 acquaintance of mine says, looks like a  
 continual *Gasconade*. They are full as  
 much for big sort of phrases, which are  
 flung out at random, and of which the very  
 best are only good by chance<sup>f</sup>. They seem  
 to pen down their thoughts at a venture,  
 first chusing their words by the bulk and  
 sound, and then forcing 'em into a pre-  
 tended context; though in reality their very  
 way and jog of writing, naturally throws  
 them out of true connection.

CRITOM. At least you will not, I hope,  
 make *Callicrates* answerable for his mis-  
 taken pretenders to his Style.

EUDOX. By no means. But I am apt to  
 think it is not a very right one, since it so  
 naturally leads to the wrong.

CRITOM. But what do you think par-  
 ticularly of those parts of his book, which  
 are by way of dialogue; where the very

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<sup>f</sup> *Sententia grandes quarum optima quaque à periculo pe-  
 titur.* Quint. Lib. 2. Cap. 11.



character of familiar discourse allows a DIAL.  
greater freedom? 'Tis in them one cannot II.  
but admire to see the persons he introduces, ~~~~~  
take up one another so wittily.

EUDOX. I fear it is a kind of wit which is not altogether so natural in common discourse. Methinks too, he makes his gentlemen enter upon matters in a hurry, and as if they were resolved to run one another immediately down into conviction, by the precipitousness of their expressions. Were it not much more natural to begin with temper, and rise by degrees, and prepare a conclusion, than to enter by a start, pursue it by spurts, and snap off on a sudden? These are only doubts, I propose, not assertions; and to them I will add another. After a few words have past between the interlocutors, is it according to art, to make one of them begin to engross the discourse to himself?

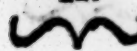
CRITOM. Why, Sir, wou'd you have him count them out their words, and make their sentences of an equal length, for fear one shou'd not have his share of talk? It is common in all conversation, for persons to advance now and then such propositions as require a longer proof, and to be deduced something more at large.

F

EUDOX.

DIAL.

II.

 EUDOX. It is so ; and therefore my doubt is chiefly concerning the way. He does it, by immediately making one profer, or the other desire his attention, because he has a great deal to say, and his head is full of matter. Then he sets him a talking with a witness. Thus *Sophronius*, in one of the dialogues, talks so long for eight or nine large pages together, that he has not breath left to give *Philander* good night : and so they part.

CRITOM. Now, *Eudoxus*, for all the modesty of your only proposing doubts, I perceive you are turning it to a banter. 'Tis the best method of making a breach in a solid reputation. I hope you will not be affronted if I observe to you, that exceptions humours never gain their point so surely as by ridiculing.

EUDOX. Believe me, that is far from my design at present, and you know it is never much my humour ; though I see no need, in matters of this nature, to be always positively grave. However, at our next meeting, we will, if you please, pursue the matter, without making use of jests for arguments. At present you must give me leave to go to my *Club*, where I promised to be a little sooner than ordinary.

I

CRITOM.

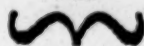
ACCURACY *of* STYLE.

67

DIAL:

CRITOM. You know you may use all  
freedom with us.

II.



CLEAND. And you might be sure we  
never designed our visit should be the least  
hindrance to your other concerns.

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F 2

T H E



THE  
THIRD DIALOGUE,  
BETWEEN  
CRITOMACHUS, EUDOXUS,  
*and* CLEANDER.

CRITOM. **W**HAT now, *Eudoxus*,  
are you going abroad?  
Have you a mind to  
decline any farther debate, and are your  
critical niceties at an end?

EUDOX. No, Sir. Not expecting you  
quite so soon, I was going no farther than  
a-cross the street, and had given orders to  
my man to call me at your arrival. The  
ceremony-visit I was upon, may as well  
be put off till another time. So, if you  
please, we will walk up to my library. Be-  
sides a reserve of former reflections, I have  
made some others since our last conference.

CLEAND. There's *Callicrates's* book  
ready, I see, upon your table. But who  
is

is that other just by him, mark'd with so many papers in different places?

DIAL.  
III.

EUDOX. 'Tis a book I have been looking into since our discourse upon the Style of *Callicrates*. Have you never seen *Feltham's Resolves*?

CRITOM. I suppose you have no great matter of advantage to be drawn from any sort of comparison between him and *Callicrates*.

CLEAND. He draws near to a hundred years old <sup>a</sup>: and sure *Callicrates's* new Style has not only a fresher, but also a more solid completion.

EUDOX. I shall leave that to others determination, when I have enter'd a few remarks upon the cause. It might be proved by several examples, that flashy Authors are not always so inventive, as one might be apt to think at the first reading; and that sometimes they only renew antiquated methods. *Feltham*, Sir, as old as he is, writes in almost as new a Style as *Callicrates*. Their expressions are often extremely parallel. Give me leave to read you the short view I have drawn up from some I

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<sup>a</sup> I have seen two editions, one *An.* 1631. another *An.* 1661.

DIAL. met with, at little more endeavour than  
 III. turning over the pages at a venture. I will  
 begin with *Callicrates*, and with your leave,  
 I will repeat some of the expressions I observ'd to you in *Critomachus's* absence.

*Callicrates.*

“ DESPAIR casts a gloominess upon the  
 “ soul, and lays her in a dungeon, beyond  
 “ the notion of pre-existence . . . . To clap  
 “ the extinguisher of honour, upon our  
 “ vital flame, rather than to let it burn  
 “ blue, and lie agonizing in the socket,  
 “ till it goes out in no perfume . . . . I find  
 “ the satisfaction of a prospect, musick, or  
 “ perfume, is not thinner for being beaten  
 “ . . . . If we wou'd only conquer our imagination,  
 “ we might die easier of a fagot, than  
 “ of a fever, . . . . because it is better to have  
 “ a fire kindled without than within me . . . .  
 “ 'Tis good husbandry to nurse up the vital  
 “ flame as long as it will last . . . . To discharge  
 “ the last pulse in the face of death . . . . To  
 “ grapple handsomly with a disease . . . . The  
 “ taste and touch engross an object to themselves,  
 “ and will not let the company share  
 “ with them. They take faster hold, it is true,  
 “ but they don't salute so ceremoniously  
 “ . . . . *Timotheus* the musician had a nearer  
 “ cut to the soul, and cou'd neck a passion at  
 “ a stroke . . . . A smile breaks out with the  
 “ brightest distinction, and sits upon the countenance  
 “ like a glory . . . . The language  
 “ of



" of the face is the short-hand of the mind DIAL.  
 " ... Pleasing retrospections and comforta- III.  
 " ble presages, are admirable opiates... &c." ~~~~~

LET these suffice from *Callicrates*. Now  
 for the other.

*Feltham's Resolves* <sup>b</sup>.

" WHEN the guard of circumspection is  
 " over, we lie spread to the shot of general  
 " danger .... Resolution is the only marshal  
 " that can keep nature in a decent order...  
 " To convert discontentment into a dimp-  
 " ling joy .... I wish no man so spiritless, as  
 " to let all abuses press the dullness of a  
 " willing shoulder .... I like that friendship,  
 " which by soft ascension degrees itself in  
 " the soul .... To undress the brain, and  
 " make him fling off all those phanatique  
 " toys, which gingle about his understand-  
 " ing. .... Those joys clasp us with a friend-  
 " lier arm, that steal upon us when we  
 " look not for 'em. I will cozen my pain  
 " with carelessness, and plump my joys  
 " by letting 'em surprize me. As I wou'd  
 " not neglect a sudden good opportunity,  
 " so I wou'd not fury my self in the search...  
 " Knowing our weakness, we must sinew it  
 " with a stronger nerve ... Some joys wind  
 " downwards into sharpful extremities .....  
 " Some calamities challenge the tribute of

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<sup>b</sup> Resolve 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 11, 61.

REFLECTIONS *upon*

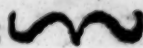
DIAL. " a bleeding eye, because they are unacquainted with the gloominess of downfalls. . . . Nothing does more midnight the soul, than sudden great misfortunes. " They are the strapadoes of human soul."

Now, Gentlemen, let me ask you if you perceive no likeness between their Styles, and the turn they give to their thoughts.

CRITOM. I must own the *Parallel* runs more exactly than I could have imagined. And I perceive it is good to stand upon one's guard against the surprizing appearance of novelty.

CLEAND. And to take some leisure moments, to observe more particularly those methods of writing, which seem so pretty at first, and upon reflection and comparison, fall soon to a lower esteem, and at length into oblivion. For I see no reason why, between those two Authors, there should be any vast difference of fate in so great a likeness of Style.

EUDOX. I told you before, that I thought that sort of Style would not be of a lasting credit, because it is too violent. And according to the proverb, *nihil violentum diuturnum*, no Author who writes unnaturally, whose expressions are apparently forced and artificial; and who clearly seems, as I think

think *Callicrates* expresses it, to think DIAL.  
upon the stretch, can be long approved. III.  
It was upon this reason that *Boileau*   
said, one cou'd not tell whether *Balzac's*  
credit wou'd last, because, notwithstanding  
the great esteem he was in at first, several  
began soon to be disabused; and now,  
says he, one can't pardon him that vitious  
industry of expressing his thoughts, quite  
a different way from all other men. So,  
what was first said to praise him, is now a  
satyr upon him, that *never mortal talk'd*  
*like him.*

CLEAND. I daily enter more into your  
opinion, that a natural smooth way of  
writing, is far preferable to that high-flown  
way. And I wish you wou'd let us wave,  
for the present, any farther particular re-  
flections upon *Callicrates*, except in some  
few meerly incident passages, that we may  
insist a little farther than hitherto, upon the  
particular rules of writing with true Ele-  
gance and Accuracy.

CRITOM. With all my heart. For I am  
sensible, that as personal quarrels hinder  
the right judging even of the plainest mat-  
ters, so it is much harder to judge right  
of the true perfection of Style, while a par-

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¶ Refl. 7. upon *Longinus*.




DIAL. ticular Author is criticized or defended,  
 III. than when only incident examples are  
 brought, independently of that kind of personal quarrel.

EUDOX. And therefore, taking the matter in the method proposed, I must needs own again, I am altogether for the smooth, easy, natural Style. Easy, as I said, in appearance, because it is neither harsh nor affected. But such, as (because nothing can be smooth, that is not perfectly proportion'd and agreeing in its parts) will ever be found upon trial to require the most art and care in polishing.

CLEAND. I remember to that purpose, I lately took particular notice of a passage in the *Education of a Prince*, by *Chantresne* (or whoever they were that join'd hands with him in the work) where<sup>d</sup> he distinguishest two sorts of beauty in eloquence, whereof the one consists in pretty and solid, but at the same time extraordinary and surprizing thoughts; such as are frequent in *Seneca*, *Lucan*, and *Tacitus*; the other, in a natural air, in an easy, plain, but nicely accurate elegance of common *Images*, such as give a lively, agreeable, genuine representation; which is the character of *Virgil*. And he adds, that one may con-

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<sup>d</sup> Part 2. §. 39.

clude, this sort of eloquence is harder than DIAL.  
the other, since of all Authors no one has III.  
been less perfectly resembled by imitation,   
than *Virgil*.

EUDOX. I am no great admirer of that company of desperate essays, which the Authors are pleased to call, *the Education of a Prince*; whereas twenty other titles wou'd have been more proper. And I find, by the reflection you mention, that those gentlemen seldom speak truth without a mixture of error. For I can't grant that solidity is part of the true character of those surprizing authors. As to the other part of the reflection, give me leave to add, that as I doubt whether even *Grotius*, or the other great admirers of *Lucan*, do at the bottom prefer him to *Virgil*; so I can hardly think you prefer the flashy, metaphorical Style, to such a one, for example, as Sir *William Temple's*.

CRITOM. You have certainly pitch'd upon an excellent author. But I can't assent to so great an admiration of him, as to make his Style a certain law. I am against any slavery to the points of nice rules, and I like those who, like the *free-born* subjects of eloquence, shew that a greatness of genius has placed them above the servile fear of meaner Authors. Some, especially confirm'd by the success of applauded irregularities,

DIAL. larities, may securely condemn the severity  
 III. of *Rule-ridden criticks*. And (besides that  
 ~~~~~ fear is a deceitful teacher of right and wrong,  
 as *Pliny*<sup>e</sup> says) I wish your moderate and  
 smooth writers prove not often greater ar-  
 guments of a short reach, than of an ac-  
 curate judgment.

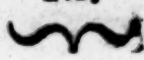
EUDOX. And I wish on the other hand,  
 that freedom and elevation were not subject  
 to excessive deceits. In some men there is  
 an artificial grandeur, which strikes at first  
 view, but you soon find it is only an af-  
 fectation of a noble mien, a studied assurance,  
 a composed air and countenance. In others  
 there is a real greatness under an equal,  
 plain, easy mien, independent of gait and  
 gesture, and the effect of a real nobility of  
 birth and education, not the consequence  
 of a bought or borrowed *Title*. A solid  
 merit breaks thro' the modesty of their be-  
 haviour, and is at length acknowledged by  
 all who converse with them. 'Tis much  
 the same in ways of writing.

CLEAND. But as some people dress in all  
 the niceties of fashion, and consult their  
 glass, till they set their faces in all the  
 shapes of constraint and study, whereas a  
 genteel negligence is far more graceful;  
 so it is in writing, and expressing of thoughts.

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<sup>e</sup> *Infidelis recti magister est metus.* Plin. Panegyr. Trajani.



And therefore, methinks, *Critomachus* may DIAL.  
be allowed to plead against too great a III.  
severity of rule. 

CRITOM. And truly, when I lately read in *Tacitus* <sup>f</sup>, that under the Emperor *Tiberius* the commonwealth was as much plagued with laws, as it had been with vices before; well, said I, 'tis to be fear'd we shall have reason to say as much under the tyranny of criticks. Laws and rules of writing will prove as prejudicial to the republick of learning, as all the faults of former Authors.

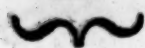
EUDOX. The same *Tacitus*, Sir, to reply in the like way, tells us, that *Otho*, the night before he killed himself, or (as some wou'd express it) before *he died of his sword*, counsel'd his nephew never to forget, nor yet to remember too much, that *Otho* the Emperor was his uncle <sup>g</sup>. Meaning, that the fond memory of his extraction shou'd not make him haughty; nor the forgetfulness of it betray him into baseness. In the like manner (however unexpected may seem the application) if constant reflections upon Art and Rules shou'd not make one too mean in writing, so too great a forgetful-

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<sup>f</sup> *Ut antehac flagitiis, ita tunc legibus laborabatur.* Lib. 3. Annal.

<sup>g</sup> *Patruum sibi Othonem fuisse nec oblivisceretur unquam nec nimium meminisset.* Tacit. Hist. Lib. 12.

DIAL. nefs of 'em shou'd not make him over licentious.  
III.



CLEAND. What if one shou'd here appeal from *Tacitus* to *Salust*, and maintain, that as he says in the oration of *Catiline*, those are always most in danger in a battle, who are most afraid<sup>n</sup>; so those writers are most apt to fall into irreparable mistakes who are most timorous.

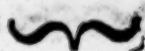
EUDOX. I wou'd reply, that is the saying of a rash and desperate rebel. Nor can I think, that even one of your undaunted mind will deny a difference between fear and prudent caution. However, not to have *Critomachus* mistake me, I declare again, I am not so rivetted to rules, as to think it is never possible to make a blameless fault. For tho' in morals there can be no free, and yet blameless fault, yet in writing there may: and I am so far from thinking a neglected period can never please even a severe judge, that I think it may be sometimes more agreeable than the greatest exactness. To such happy mistakes or faults I wou'd apply what *Martial* says of *Scevola*,

*Major deceptæ fama est & gloria dextræ :  
Si non errasset, fecerat illa minus.*

<sup>n</sup> *Semper in pralio iis est maximum periculum qui maxime timent.* *Salust.* in *Orat. Catil.*

His

His erring hand has gain'd him greater fame:  
He had done less, by taking truer aim.



CRITOM. The application of those verses puts me in mind of an *Emblem* or *Devise* of *Aretius*, which he takes from the distinction, and inequality of the fingers, that adds to the beauty of the hand. The *Motto* is, *disparitate pulchrior*; so to express that diversity of wits and humours, makes human society more agreeable. Without disputing with *Bouhours*<sup>i</sup>, whether this is an exact and regular *Devise*, I will apply it now to our present discourse. For there is a certain inequality of Style which adds a charming grace.

EUDOX. Most certainly there is. But 'tis no less certain the inequality must generally be such as is observed by nature: That is, in due proportion to some common use, or necessary to some particular exigence.

CLEAND. Give me leave to urge again, that the more you ground your reply upon nature, the more you seem to derogate from the constraint of rules.

EUDOX. Pardon me, Sir. For nothing is more generally constant to rules, than nature. And besides, you see I often say, that

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<sup>i</sup> Entretiens d'*Ariste* & d'*Eugene*.



DIAL. nothing can be truly eloquent which is not  
 III. natural. For eloquence can't be without  
 ~~~~~ reason, and reason is grounded in nature.  
 Now though nothing can be natural that is  
 not easy and free (for nature hates constraint) yet it is not therefore to be suppos'd  
 that nature is opposite to rule and art. On  
 the contrary, neither has nature ever more  
 noble productions than when seconded by art,  
 nor are the greatest natural wits ever more ex-  
 travagant than when they neglect the limits  
 of a reasonable method. *Longinus* \* ex-  
 presses himself to this purpose in the fol-  
 lowing comparison: "As ships are in  
 " imminent danger when abandon'd to their  
 " own lightness without sufficient ballast;  
 " so it is in the sublimest Styles when aban-  
 " don'd to the impetuosity of a rash or ig-  
 " norant nature." The greatest wits are  
 naturally fiery and fertile, and thence more  
 apt to run into immoderate thoughts and  
 expressions.

CRITOM. Well, Sir, granting that rules  
 must be regarded, pray'e what particular  
 rules will you prescribe?

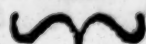
EUDOX. I am not so presumptuous as to  
 prescribe any. All I mean is, that such  
 shou'd be observed as have been deliver'd by

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\* De Sublimi, cap. 2.

men of unquestionable authority in the DIAL.  
matter.

III.



CRITOM. What ? must not a man let pass a sentence from his pen, till he has examin'd it according to *Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian* ?

EUDOX. Why truly, under favour, that is my opinion, and I am persuaded no one will arrive at any great perfection in the art of writing, who is not well versed in those, or other authors who have explicated their main principles in that matter. Nor is this so impossible as you seem to imagine. For as in point of the *Latin* construction, *Lilly's* rules must be observed, and are so, not by any reflex thought, but by an habitual knowledge of them in one that writes *Latin* with facility ; so writing accurately according to the prescriptions of those great men, may be attain'd without your apprehended impossibility of reflecting upon so nice and numerous rules. The chief, and to which most of them may be reduced as to our present purpose, consist in the right choice and use of *proper words* and *metaphors*, in the *harmony* and *cadence* of periods, and above all in the *exactness of truth and reason*, in every part and proposition.

CLEAND. As for proper words, or such as include no metaphor, I believe the most  
G rigorous

DIAL. rigorous rules will be allow'd of, even by  
 III. *Critomachus* himself. Unless perhaps as to  
 ~~~~~ the liberty of coining new words, or bor-  
 rowing from foreign languages. For I  
 know he admires some authors who give  
 themselves a great liberty in that kind.

EUDOX. Yet upon reflection, I believe he  
 will assent to *Quintilian*<sup>1</sup>, that “ It is more  
 “ secure to take such words as are in use,  
 “ and dangerous to venture at framing new  
 “ ones : because, says *Quintilian*, if they  
 “ succeed, your praise will be little ; and  
 “ if rejected, they will expose you to be  
 “ banter'd.” It will be like making a ridi-  
 culous figure in a borrowed and singular  
 dress.

CRITOM. Sure you forget what I hinted  
 at before, that *Aristotle* often says it is a  
 mighty grace to use such expressions as have  
 a *foreign* air.

EUDOX. Pardon me, Sir. I have read  
 again, since our last conferences, several  
 places of him, and the more I think of  
 what he means by *foreign expressions*, and  
 particularly (to mention no other) in the  
 3d Book, 2d Chapter of his Rhetorick, the

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<sup>1</sup> *Usitatis verbis tutius utimur, nova non sine quodam pe-  
 riculo fingimus. Nam si recepta sunt, modicam laudem afferunt,  
 repudiata etiam jocos excitant.* Instit. lib. 1. cap. 5.



more I am convinced of the reserve he requires in that kind. And I think what he generally means is comprised in the saying of *Horace*<sup>m</sup>; which I shall not offer to translate, since I have heard say Mr. *Dryden* own'd he cou'd not equal it.

DIAL.  
III.

*Dixeris egregiè notum si callida verbum  
Reddiderit junctura novum.*

'Tis not taking words from foreign languages, or metaphors from foreign subjects, that he means ; but such an use, combination and application of known words, as may cause the admiration and pleasure of novelty.

CLEAND. Nay, even speaking of Poetry<sup>n</sup>, I met with a place where he says it is very hard to use foreign words within the bounds of sufficient moderation and decency.

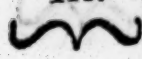
CRITOM. However, I must desire you both to reflect, that our language does unquestionably give us a great advantage in the privilege it has by prescription, of taking words from other languages. 'Tis as profitable to our authors, as our *Importations* from the *Indies* are to our merchants.

<sup>m</sup> Art. Poët.

<sup>n</sup> *Ceterum, magni negotii est in peregrinis minimè a decenti recedere, minimeque eis abuti.* Poët. cap. 21.

DIAL.

III.

 EUDOX. The comparison will run still farther. For as those *Companies* wou'd prove indeed beneficial to particulars, but highly prejudicial to the nation in general, if not confin'd to certain Laws ; so the liberty of taking words and expressions from other languages, might upon many occasions be useful to particular writers, by the nature of the subject they manage, yet it wou'd certainly at length prove very prejudicial to the language in general. In the former case, the false appearance of wealth in the importation of *Silks, Spices, &c.* wou'd exhaust the treasure of the nation, by carrying out our ready money, and other inconveniences, largely discours'd of in several books of late years : so besides other inconveniences, the true stock and fund of our language wou'd be lost in a boundless liberty of using extern words and phrases.

CLEAND. I have often observed that too great a mixture of that kind, makes a confused *Jargon*, and is insupportable to every judicious reader. *Brown* in his preface to *Vulgar Errors* complain'd long since, we shou'd soon be forced to study *Latin*, that we might understand *English* ; and now *French* expressions and words are so thrown in without any measure, that if you know not this, you will be much puzzled to read books that pretend to be in your mother-tongue.

CRITOM.

CRITOM. In some authors I cou'd wish a greater reservedness in that kind. Nor can I but wonder at *Brown* for using so much, in that very place, the liberty he complains of.

EUDOX. What will you then say to these expressions I have mark'd from one single *Resolve* of *Feltham*? Here he tells you that a good man is full of *gladding vivifications*; That drunkenness is the *floating of the strenless senses, and disapparels the soul, and by it even thoughts suffer a denudation*. That *the most benighted cogitations tumble in this flood from the swelled tongue*; that *it bestiates the bravest spirits*.

CLEAND. Bless me! what stuff is this?

EUDOX. You have here moreover, *Epotations of dumb liquour, inebriations, a temulentive tongue, the brainsickness with giddy verminations, &c.*

CRITOM. This I must own is detestable. But we are now-a-days sufficiently free from that sort of Style.

EUDOX. I fear there is something of it in these expressions of *Callicrates*: *Pleasing*

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° *Resolve* 84.



DIAL. retrospections and comfortable presages, being admirable opiates ; in his diluted happiness, galliardizing notes, and his paradisiacal temper from a post-diluvian mortal. In this same paper I have mark'd a few expressions out of *Machiavel Redivivus*, not unlike that sort of language. To please the *Earl* he dedicates unto, he falls admiring his *refulgent qualities*, and then declares, that *the exuberous current of his inexhausted virtues cannot be oppugned even by the strength of malice*. Where, to say nothing of *exuberous*, methinks to *oppugn a current* is very odd *English*. The very first words of his Preface are, *how horrendous are the times*. Now this is meer *Tragicomick* ; for *horrendous* is ridiculous, in spite of its dreadful sound. There follows immediately, that *ambition is dark, and cannot bear the luminous irradiations of another's peace*. Besides that *irradiations of a man's peace* is strange enough, such words as *luminous* and *irradiations* are not, I think, to be used, unless in a philosophical discourse upon the nature of light. Moreover, though that same Author has just reason to complain of those who make the most sacred ordinations serve their impious designs ; one cannot help smiling when he says<sup>p</sup>, *they force 'em to obstetricate to their designs*. Of this nature, in Mr. *Dodwell's*

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<sup>p</sup> *Machiavel Redivivus*, pag. 8.

*two letters of advice, you have ; to expiate* DIAL.  
*impudent imprudence ; preconsideration is* III.  
*better than postnate advice ; prostituting* ~~~~~  
*and defecrating truth ;* and other expressions almost as unaccountable, as his opinions in religion. I cou'd gather several more instances of this sort, to prove we are not sufficiently free from the affectation of such terms, as are newly coin'd or forg'd.

CLEAND. I suppose your opinion of old words, is much the same as of new ones ; since in effect they become new by being brought again to use from neglect and oblivion.

CRITOM. However, unless they are too frequent and too far superannuated, they have upon occasions a particular grace, and according to *Aristotle*, make the discourse more venerable<sup>9</sup>.

EUDOX. And more ridiculous, unless they are used with great discretion. Give me leave to add this reason, which occurs to me now, why great care must be had in the use of what you call *superannuated* words. The reason is, that unless you fall into the hands of as learned an Antiquary as our great *Selden*, your readers will be as

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<sup>9</sup> *Sanctiorem & admirabiliorem faciunt orationem.* Rhet. lib. 3. cap. 2.

DIAL. displeas'd with you as if you designed to  
 III. puzzle them, and to reflect upon their ignorance. Much of the like reason holds in foreign words.

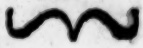
CLEAND. By your way of mentioning the word *super-annuated*, and *ante-diluvian* mortals of *Callicrates*, I am minded to ask your opinion concerning compound words.

EUDOX. *Aristotle*<sup>r</sup> seems to appropriate them to *Dithyrambicks*, even in *Greek* which bears them much better than *Latin* or any of our neighbouring languages. In ours they are far from being noble and magnificent. Yet some we allow in verse, which do not pass in prose; and some, especially double compounds, I shou'd hardly think ever allowable. Which makes me doubt whether to *over-de-preciate* will be long approved, especially being compounded of destructive terms, and it is in reality, as if you should say, to *over-under-value*. Upon the whole; words must neither be too old nor too new. We should do as Dr. *Sprat* says *Cowley* did: That he had no manner of affectation in them, taking them as he found them made to his hand, *neither going before, nor coming after the use of the age*. The other reflections that

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<sup>r</sup> *Utilissima est duplex elocutio Dithyrambicis: isti enim sunt pleni strepitus.* Rhet. lib. 3. cap. 2.



might be offer'd upon the choice of words, DIAL.  
will be sufficiently comprized in those we III.  
shall make upon the cadence, metaphors,   
and proportions of expressions to their sub-  
ject.


CRITOM. As to the *cadence*, notwithstanding what you said lately, I cannot imagine to what niceties you wou'd reduce us. Sure at least you wou'd not have the harmony of sound, take place of sense. Must reason yield, to let the period fall; or an argument lose its force, to let the cadence be smooth?

EUDOX. By no means. But I would have it pass for certain, that reason is never more persuasive than when harmonious. And we find that when the senses strike in with reason, even virtue and morality gain their cause; and when the ear and mind are pleas'd together, we are far more easily convinced, than when a part of us is still dissatisfied. Nor can I imagine it will be hard to conclude how great a deference must be had to the ear in the use of words, if we reflect, that the very same words differently placed, move and engage with a very different influence. And experience teaches us, that such is the connection between sense and reason in man, that harmony, tho' no part of the argument, is commonly a part of the persuasiveness: so willing we are to believe,

DIAL. lieve, that what pleases, is true. Nor is this  
III. to be understood only of reciting or speaking,  
ing, but also of writing. For the eye calls  
upon the ear, if I may use the expression,  
in the way to the understanding; and the  
sound of the words, tho' you read them in  
silence, gets as soon to the ear, as the sense  
to the mind.

CRITOM. Is not at least the harmony you  
speak of, too arbitrary a thing to be reduced  
to rule? since what is harmony to one, is  
displeasing to another.

EUDOX. Tho' in some respects it is arbitrary, yet something there is, that pleases every one's ear. And tho' it is not so much to be learnt by art as by genius, yet reflecting upon those Authors that are most universally liked, it may be learnt, at least in great measure. Or, at least, some faults will be as easily discerned as a crack'd untunable voice in a consort of musick. Such must be carefully avoided. As for example: the frequent concurrence of vowels, and their cutting upon one another; a harsh rumbling of consonants; and frequent repeating the same words. For the ear is soon tired without the entertainment of different sounds. Even the sweetest numbers, like sweetmeats, are most apt to surfeit.

CLEAND. To this effect I remember the DIAL.  
advice of *Boileau*, in the translation you late- III.  
ly shewed me <sup>f</sup>. 

*Of writing well if you wou'd gain the praise,  
Be sure still to variate your phrase.  
A constant, and a never vary'd style,  
Tho' ne'er so sweet and pleasing for a while,  
Yet soon grows tedious, and the reader swears  
The luscious Author's born to plague his ears.*

I find by daily experience the like effect from those Styles in prose, which are *homogeneal*, by their perpetual ending in a short cut of an antithesis, or something like it. It is as bad as perpetually to make rhymes, clinches, or blank verse. In poets, who will be such in spite of nature, you soon grow accustomed to their hackney trivial rhymes, and wherever you meet *Name*, your ear is already full with *Fame*. Thus in some people's prose, my ear rings with the following sound, before my eye has reached the word, and I laugh if I meet the fall I expected, and wonder if I do not; and either way, think more of the sound than of the meaning. Which, as you observed from *Aristotle*, is certainly a great fault; words being to lead the Author's meaning to our mind, not to remove our attention, and fix it on the sound.

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<sup>f</sup> Art Poétique.



DIAL.

III.

W EUDOX. Those, and the like faults, are not hard to be observed and avoided, and therefore are unpardonable when frequent. As for other rules of cadence and quantity of the syllables, they have not that place in our language as in *Greek* and *Latin*. And therefore in poetry we are thrown into the wretched necessity of rhymes. So that I know no better method to get the right harmony and agreeableness of Style, than to do as *Milton* says he did in his blindness,

*Feed upon thoughts which voluntarie move  
Harmonious numbers* †.

And then to observe the vein of the best writers: such as Sir *William Temple*, whose Style is easy and natural; Mr. *Dryden*, whose prose is no less harmonious than his verse; and such others: and in fine, translating some places of the most smooth and fluent Authors, either out of *Latin* or *French*. Thus may the ear be insensibly habituated to the true gracefulness of proper and never-cloying numbers.

CRITOM. I am far from having any thing against the authors or methods you proposed. But as I am pleased with more sorts of

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† *Milton*, Lib. 3. ver. 37.

musick than one, so I am with several DIAL.  
 sorts of Style. Nor am I yet grown so III.  
 nice as *Cleander*, to abominate those short cuts he lately censured; nor is my ear grown  
 yet so expecting and sharp, as to prevent  
 my eye, and to hear the sound in silence.  
 Then as for vowels cutting upon one another,  
 and your harsh rumbling of consonants,  
 I have not observed any thing remarkable  
 of that kind in the concise Authors who  
 fall most under your censure. Besides,  
 there is a kind of harmony in harshness  
 of numbers sometimes, as there is a pleasure  
 of the eye in some objects of terror. Thus  
*Tasso*<sup>u</sup>, of an army drawn up in battle-  
 array, says,

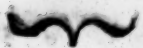
*Bello in sì bella vista anco è l'orrore ;  
 E di mezzo la tema esce il diletto.  
 Ne men le trombe horribili, e canore,  
 Sono à gli orecchi lieto e fero oggetto.*

Horror it self pleas'd in so fine a sight,  
 And from the midst of fear there rose delight.  
 And th' ears from drums and trumpets  
 dreadful sound,  
 A no less fierce, and pleasing object found.

There are then places in which harsh numbers  
 are grateful, and in which a softer turn

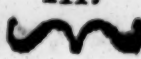
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<sup>u</sup> *Gierusalemme*, Canto 20. Stan. 30.

DIAL. might please the ear, but would offend the  
III. judgment, and prove the Author more  
 skill'd in sound than sense. For certainly a  
studied falling of periods, and disposing of  
words, where even reason shou'd seem in a  
manner discomposed by the passion, must  
needs be as displeasing to the understanding,  
as it might otherwise be pleasing to the ear.  
*Might* otherwise, I say: For to speak pro-  
perly, nothing methinks can please the ear  
that displeases reason. The very sound of  
the words, if contrary to the exigence of  
the subject, turns to a jarring discord.

EUDOX. While you make such reflections  
as these, I shall hardly think you will conti-  
nue much averse from exacting a great nicety  
of rule to a reasonable and proper way of  
writing. I shall conclude moreover, that  
your judgment prevails against the prejudice  
you have taken to whatever looks like criti-  
cism. And therefore I am persuaded you  
will soon be a less admirer of some ways of  
writing which you have rather had a difficul-  
ty to censure or condemn, than a reflex  
design to approve. And at present, not-  
withstanding your declaring against a nice  
ear, I fancy you will not deny but that, ex-  
cepting such occasions as you have men-  
tion'd, wherein reason is disorder'd by pas-  
sion, there is a roughness of numbers which  
can't be excused. In verses it is easily ob-  
served. Nor do I believe there is so dull,  
or



or so indulgent an ear, as not to find fault DIAL.  
with the numbers, how much soever he III.  
may be pleas'd with the sense of this *Epi-*   
*gram*<sup>w</sup>.

*Ex tuo enim animo haud potes haud novisse  
meum illum,  
Qui suum in hac tuâ agit dudum animâ  
ipse animum.*

Which may be thus turn'd in just as many  
words, and just the same harshness of num-  
bers :

My mind you can't but from your own heart  
tell,  
Since 'tis so long that mine in your's does  
dwell.

In prose too, something of the like harsh-  
ness is easily perceived, and much to be  
avoided. For instance : when *Callicrates*  
says, *conceit with a mixture of gravity is an  
admirable wash to make one look as wise as  
one wou'd wish* : I cannot think but you  
find that *wash, wish, as, wise, would*, so  
near together, make a horrid sound. Such  
words are not sociable, and ought to be  
kept at a greater distance.

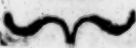
CRITOM. Such faults however are rare in  
him, and others who write in the Style you  
most decry.

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<sup>w</sup> Indisfert. prævia ad delectum Epigrammatum.

DIAL.

III.

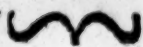
 EUDOX. I can't say I have observed them frequent. The nature of their Style turns 'em into another jog; and were it not for the oddnesses of their abrupt, and yet expected and foreseen cadences, I shou'd have little to say to them upon this account. And upon this whole subject, I will only add, that the thought, if well and properly digested, will generally of it self give the right order of the words; and that the natural division, and care of ranging the notions, will make the harmony, as it does the wit and sense of the discourse. Other times, especially in longer periods, the ear must be consulted upon the syllables and words; it must be admitted into the examination of their force, their sound, their quantity, their agreement, and their proper place.

CLEAND. Upon the reflections you have given me occasion to make, it must then be in the harmony of *English* prose as it is with our rhymes in verse. Whence it will follow that a great rule of attaining the perfection in it, is to be severe and exact in the beginning. And therefore what *Boileau*\* counsels upon rhymes, may be applied to a Style in prose.

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\* Art. Poët. Canto 1.

*What-*

*Whate'er's your subject, pleasant or sublime,  
Make an agreement 'twixt your sense and*   
*rhyme;*

*And never let them go a different way:  
Rhyme's but a slave, and must be taught t'obey:  
If from the first beginnings you provide,  
To make them closely stick to reason's side,  
You'll find at length they need not far be  
sought,  
They'll of themselves come rolling to your  
thought.*

*Rhymes kept at first severely under awe,  
Do easily submit to every law  
Of sense: but when by negligence set free,  
They soon rebel, and then will ever be  
At odds with reason for the upper hand;  
And the best thoughts begun by the command  
Of reason, then alas! will oftentimes  
End in a folly to obey the rhymes.*

EUDOX. Most certainly that happens much too often; and I question not but an over-great concern for the cadence in prose, may have as bad an effect. It is what has been already sufficiently agreed upon. Reason must begin and end. Which however, if rightly taken, will not hinder the truth of what *Aristotle* says, that altho' the interpunctions shou'd be wanting, yet the very numbers, and harmony, and cadence, should shew the end of the periods, and

H

their



DIAL. their separate parts<sup>y</sup>. To come now to *Metaphors* (comprizing under the same, *Images*, as they call them, and the like) they are certainly grown excessively frequent, and unpardonable in several of those I call *new-style* Authors. And I fear we shall soon be, or already are reduced to the circumstances which made *Quintilian* say, that all the grace of *Metaphors* was lost, or worn away, by the too frequent use and liberty of them<sup>z</sup>.

CRITOM. Before you fall so much out with metaphors, be pleased, Sir, to remember that *Aristotle* says they are the chief ornaments of Style. Because, says he, (and whatever may be my opinion of his physick, I must own he is admirable in his reasoning upon these things) we have naturally a great desire of knowledge. Consequently those words give the greatest pleasure which bring the most knowledge the shortest way<sup>a</sup>. Now *Metaphors*, besides the subject to which they are applied, express at the same time another different one, and bring to the mind several objects under one view.

EUDOX. That very reason shews they should not be too frequent. For then

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<sup>y</sup> Oportet manifestum esse finem, non per librarium, neque per paragraphen, sed per numeros.

<sup>z</sup> Jam in his amissimus modum, & gratiam rei nimia captatione consumpsimus. Quint. lib. 8. cap. 6. post medium.

<sup>a</sup> Faciliter discere omnibus a natura jucundum est: quare quacunque ex verbis velocem nobis ingerunt disciplinam, hac suavissima sunt. Arist. Rhet.

they

they rather clog than adorn the discourse, and are more apt to confound than inform the mind. A perpetual rolling of Metaphors I take also to be something like changing of scenes upon stages. They are to be changed sometimes for the pleasure of the eye, and to help the plot. But if every moment you shift from palaces to woods, from woods to temples, from them to tents, from tents to seas, and so round again ; I am more displeased with your forcing me to such sudden turns in my imagination, and with your shuffling and unavoidable bungling, than I am pleased with the variety. Thus metaphorical expressions give both grace and strength to the thoughts, when judiciously used. But if continually heap'd upon a subject, they obscure it, hinder requisite attention to the main point, and the reader is more displeased with the confusion and jumbling, than pleased with the multiplicity of your notions, and his own.

CLEAND. *Cicero* ( I remember the comparison from the schools) compares them to clothes, which, first invented for necessity, served afterwards for ornament<sup>b</sup>. They supply the want of proper

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<sup>b</sup> *Ut vestis frigoris depellendi causâ reperta primò, post adhiberi cœpta est etiam ad ornatum corporis & dignitatem ; sic verbi translatio instituta est inopia causâ, frequentata delectationis.*  
Cic. de Orat. lib 3. post. medium.

DIAL. words, and grace the discourse when right-  
III. ly used. But, upon what you was saying,

~~~~~ I may add, that as clothes from a cover  
against cold and shame, become an incum-  
brance by several modish inconveniences,  
and degenerate into vanity and luxury; so  
Metaphors, from necessity and ornament,  
become a luxuriant and uneasy extrava-  
gance, and hinder the free, natural, and  
clear conveyance of thought. I wish too,  
that as the vanity of dressing puts several  
upon expences too great for their condition,  
so the vanity of metaphorizing did not put  
several upon a greater stretch of thoughts  
than their wit will bear.

EUDOX. In effect, 'tis common to find  
that peoples vanity is larger than their purse.  
And as the mode now goes, few are so ju-  
dicious, as to measure their appearance by  
their stock. Nor is it less easy to observe  
that the way of writing draws several into  
the like excess. In one case, too much  
is laid out upon clothes, to leave a sufficient  
remainder for the comfortable entertain-  
ment of life, and much less for the support  
of a lasting fortune; and in the other, too  
much is spent upon the finery of those  
gaudy expressions, to leave a sufficient sup-  
ply for the carrying on such a solid discourse  
as may please a judicious reader, and give a  
lasting reputation to the author.

CLEAND.



CLEAND. Even before I found upon tryal that such authors please less, the more they are read, I always was something dissatisfied with too frequen Metaphors; and now upon our discoursing these matters, and having read some places of *Aristotlè*, *Cicero*, and *Quintilian*, I am far more apt to disapprove them. Among other observations, I find they are far from giving that force and energy to the discourse which is imagined. The variety of Ideas they suggest, is not only apt to make a confusion, and tire, as it were, the mind before it can break thro' the croud of them, and reach the author's thought; but also, either weakens the reason by a false application, or at least, upon an exact review, it will be found, the strength is less than it appear'd. Especially in *metaphorical Epithets*, which only add number, not force. Whereupon *Quintilian* compares such discourses to armies, wherein if the *Vivandiers* and boys are multiplied too much, they only hinder marches and expedition; and tho' they double the number, are far from doubling the strength<sup>c</sup>.

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<sup>c</sup> Ne oneretur tamen multis. Nam sit longa & impedita (oratio) ut eam judices similem agmini totidem lixas habenti quot milites: in quo & numerus est duplex, nec duplum virium. Quint. Instit. lib. 8. cap. 6. circa medium.

DIAL.

III.

EUDOX. I wish we cou'd prevail with *Critomachus* to read those Authors upon the matters we have been discoursing of. I am perswaded he wou'd soon own, that, without falling into *the Iniquity of Criticizing*, one may find fault with several writers in these points, and particularly in this.

CRITOM. I shall certainly follow your advice in reading them with attention. I have hitherto had no farther acquaintance with them than what I brought from schools: excepting something of *Aristotle*, whom I read now and then, to find something that may help me in discoursing against the *Peripateticks*, from their own master. And to let you see that as to the present matter, I am not so far from being reclaimed, nor so averse from exactness, if it degenerates not into the ill-natured weakness of criticism; I own plainly, that in those very Authors I have liked so much, their metaphors have sometimes disgusted me; not only because too frequent, but also because either mean, or too great, or very disparate, or not consequently managed.

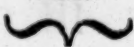
EUDOX. Those are in effect the greatest faults in this matter. Of the three former sorts (says *Quintilian*<sup>d</sup>) any one that knows they

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<sup>d</sup> *Quorum exempla nimium frequenter deprehendet qui scierit hæc vitia esse.* Quint. l. 8. Inst. cap. 6.

they are vicious, will easily observe too frequent examples. The latter, (if I take your meaning right) is joining different metaphors in the same period, or making a pretended sequel of discourse with one kind of them in the beginning, and ending with another. Beginning for example with a *Tempest*, and ending with a *Conflagration*. Which *Quintilian*, in the same place, says, is most diligently to be avoided, as being a mighty deformity by the inconsequent combination of objects \*.

DIAL.  
III.



CRITOM. What you say, is so exactly my meaning, that I had a kind of reflection upon that very place of *Quintilian*, which I had taken notice of not long ago, when I casually found it cited in the *Doubts upon the French Tongue*. And as far as I can guess by some examples of that book, and the reflections he makes upon them, I shou'd, by reading it over, easily become much more nice in my judgment of Styles, than I imagined.

EUDOX. It wou'd certainly make you examine them, and consequently disapprove them. To pursue the point we were upon, I fear these lines in *Callicrates* are an ex-

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\* In primis est custodiendum ut quo ex genere cœperis translationis hoc desinas. Multi enim cum initium a tempestate sumpserunt, incendio aut ruinâ finiunt: quæ est inconsequentia rerum fœdissima, Lib. 8. Cap. 6. post medium.



DIAL. ample of a vicious combination of meta-

III. phors. "The greater part of men, says

~ "he, enter only like mutes to fill the stage.  
 "Sure they think themselves born only to  
 "shew their insignificancy. Why else do  
 "they make the voyage of life to so little  
 "purpose, and spend their taper in smoak  
 "and smother?" Here you have the *stage*,  
 the *voyage*, the *taper* of life, and this  
 consuming in *smoak* and *smother*. Strange  
 Ideas to press the same thought in a breath!  
 Such inconsistent or various expressions are  
 very common with those Authors, who are  
 too easy in following the heat of imagina-  
 tion, and cannot fix it sufficiently for the  
 finishing out the true sequel of notions.

CLEAND. As a fault of this nature is very  
 displeasing to an observing eye, so on the  
 contrary, a metaphorical representation  
 carried on smoothly, and compleatly ma-  
 naged, has a singular grace. I remember  
 you shew'd me one not long ago on a very  
 different subject of discourse from the pre-  
 sent. It was in Mr. *Dryden's* dedication  
 of the *History of the League*. If you  
 please I will shew it to *Critomachus*. Here's  
 the place. Speaking of the troubles of our  
 nation in those times, "I look not, says  
 "he, on the storm as overblown. 'Tis  
 "still a gusty kind of weather; there is  
 "a kind of sickness in the air; it seems  
 "indeed to be clear'd for some few hours;  
 "but

“ but the wind is still blowing from the DIAL.  
 “ same corner; and when new matter is III.  
 “ gather’d into a body, it will not fail to  
 “ bring round, and pour upon us a second  
 “ tempest. I shall be glad to be found a  
 “ false prophet; but he was certainly in-  
 “ spired, who, when he saw a little cloud  
 “ arising from the sea, and that no bigger  
 “ than a hand, gave immediate notice to  
 “ the king, that he might mount the  
 “ chariot before he was overtaken by the  
 “ storm.”

CRITOM. A metaphor thus carried on, with so little mixture of any disparate or odd Ideas, is either no constraint to the mind, or keeps it upon so easy a bent, that the attention is led on as pleasingly and naturally as can be wish’d.

EUDOX. Besides carrying on the point without entring any improper or jarring notions, there is no less skill in carrying it on no farther than it ought. *La Bruyere*<sup>‡</sup> says it is the proper part of a coxcomb to be tiresome, where the man of sense shall never fail to leave you before you begin to wish he was gone. Thus a discreet Author shall leave off a Metaphor before you begin to think it too long, while another shall run it on into the tiresome lengths of

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‡ Caracteres ou Mœurs de ce siecle.

DIAL. childishness and affectation. I have here  
 III. an example of *Feltham*, which will de-  
 ~~~~~clare my meaning intelligibly enough, un-  
 less I am much mistaken \*. " Every man,  
 " says this Author, is a vast and spacious  
 " sea; his passions are the winds that swell  
 " him in disturbant waves: How he tum-  
 " bles, and roars and foams, when they  
 " in their fury trouble him! Sometimes  
 " the west of pleasure fanning in luxuriant  
 " gales; sometimes the madid south sor-  
 " rowful and full of tears; sometimes the  
 " sharp east piercing with a testy spleen;  
 " sometimes the violent and blustering  
 " north, swelling the cheek with the anger's  
 " boiling blood. Any of these in ex-  
 " tremes, make it become innavigable,  
 " and full of danger to the vessel that shall  
 " coast upon it. When these are too loud,  
 " it is perillous; but when again they are  
 " all laid in the stillness of an immotive  
 " calm, 'tis useless. And tho' it be not  
 " so ready to hurt, yet it is far from a-  
 " vailing to the profit of a voyage; and  
 " the passengers may sooner famish by being  
 " becalmed, than coast it over for the ad-  
 " vantage of their mart."

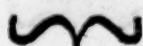
THIS example, compared with that of  
 Mr. *Dryden*, will sufficiently shew the dif-  
 ference between a metaphorical representa-

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\* *Feltham*, Resolve 62.



tion, carried smoothly and naturally on to DIAL.  
a just extent, and one that runs into a te- III.  
dious kind of childishness.



CRITOM. To give you farther hopes of my conversion, or rather to give still more grounds for the opinion you are pleas'd to have of me, that I am only against carrying rules and niceties too far; I own that kind of writing is insupportable. And I will add, that as I am displeas'd with a poetical sort of childishness, so I cannot endure the pedantick humour of drawing metaphors from sciences and subjects which are commonly unknown. No, I can't endure, for example, that to understand a *Treatise of Government*, I must first have learnt a good deal of *Catoptrics*, or that I must be acquainted with *Paraguaria*, to profit by a discourse upon prayer.

EUDOX. Thus lately, upon a very improper occasion, I heard, in a discourse from the pulpit, several expressions framed upon a *Diateffaron* and *Diapente*. I knew indeed the words were *Greek*, and related to Musick. But the more I love Musick, the less I liked the silent reproach of my ignorance in the very object of my inclination. In fine, I wonder the difficulty there is in rightly managing the metaphorical Style, does not make people more cautious how they venture upon it. *Aristotle* having said,

DIAL. said, it is hard to make a right use of compound and of foreign terms, and the other things he mentions in that place of his poetry; adds, that the hardest of all is the right use of Metaphors, or metaphorical *Similes*, and which alone cannot be taken from others, but must be had from natural judgment and wit, and is a great sign of an excellent genius<sup>h</sup>: which if seconded by observations from the practice and moderation of the choicest Authors, will be much improved.

CRITOM. I wou'd willingly ask, whether the indirect use of them is not commonly more elegant, than to say directly, this is like that. Or, in other terms, whether it is better to use the Metaphor, or the metaphorical comparison.

EUDOX. The indirect use is methinks commonly the more elegant and graceful. Thus, for example, it seems less elegant to say, that opposing hard texts of scripture against one another, is like striking one stone against another; than to give the indirect comparison in the words of <sup>i</sup> *Osborn*

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<sup>h</sup> *Multum autem est singulis de quibus diximus, recte uti posse, tum compositis vocibus tum peregrinis. Maximum autem omnium est recte uti metaphoris posse. Solum enim illud neque ab alio desumi potest, & est praeclara indicium indolis.*  
Arist. de Poët. Cap. 22.

<sup>i</sup> Advice to a Son. Sec. 5. §. 7.

in this place I have here before me, where DIAL.  
III.  
 he advises *referring disputes to clear texts,*  
*without knocking one hard place against*  
*another, till an unquenchable fire of con-*  
*tention is kindled, and jarring and uncer-*  
*tain sounds of religion are heard.* However,  
 often the direct application is proper, and  
 perhaps may be very often requisite to make  
 the *Simile* more clear and natural. And I  
 can't but like the other example I have  
 mark'd here from the same Author<sup>k</sup>: *Some*  
*melancholy constitutions, like glasses, retain*  
*in their fancies, as meerly relating to them-*  
*selves, the reflections of all things that*  
*pass in their presence.* But by giving these  
 instances from this Author, I wou'd by no  
 means be accountable for any of his loose,  
 immoral, irreligious principles, and *Innu-*  
*endo's*; nor for the many faults of his  
 Style, and particularly in the abuse of *Me-*  
*taphors* and *Similes*: as in this vile one, that  
*covetousness, like a candle ill made, smo-*  
*thers the splendor of an happy fortune, in*  
*its own grease*<sup>l</sup>: Or the odd one, where  
 he calls censure a *Purgatory*, and in the  
 same line a *Wind*; in these terms: *The*  
*way lies to the paradise of peace, through*  
*the purgatory of censure, which all must*  
*expect to find their sails fill'd with, &c.*  
 Take now this expression as you please, it

<sup>k</sup> Advice to a Son. Part 2. §. 2.

<sup>l</sup> Advice to a Son. Sec. 1. §. 35.



DIAL. will be very odd to hear of *sails fill'd with*  
 III. *the purgatory of censure.* And let thus  
 ~~~~~ much suffice, for the present, upon Meta-  
 phors.

CLEAND. Give me leave, before we pass from this point, to add a remark I made yesterday morning, upon a passage of *Calli-crates*. To prove the advantage of general kindness, he presses several instances of mutual dependance, which makes it necessary in human society. *You know*, says he, *the trade of life can't be carry'd on without partners. There is a reciprocal dependance between the greatest and the least. And the best figure is but a cypher if it stands alone.* Here you have the *trade of life*, as we had above the *stage, voyage, and taper* of it. Then we are to understand, that one can't be the greatest, if there is no one less; and this indeed I believe all his readers will conceive. But then a *cypher* being the best of figures, can only be true as it is a circle, since by itself it is no number. Now though *Arithmetick* is part of the *Mathematics*, yet many a one that knows arithmetick beyond the *Golden Rule*, or that of *Fellowship*, knows nothing of a circle being the best of figures.

EUDOX. Perhaps it may be too minute to insist upon such remarks as that. However it puts me in mind of what *Quintilian* says,

says, that continual metaphorizing, among many other inconveniences, is apt to make sentences be *Riddles*<sup>m</sup>. But to pass now to the chief point in the art of writing accurately, and which will comprehend the farther reflections which might be expected upon the metaphorical Style; to come, I say, to that *exactness of proportion and truth* which is requisite in every thought and expression, I must beg *Critomachus's* leave to be plain in giving my opinion, which will seem, I fear, a little rigid.

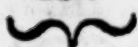
DIAL.  
III.  
~

CRITOM. To shew you how freely you may be severe in requiring the exactness which the great masters of eloquence demand, I will own to you, that methinks I am going to turn *Rigourist* myself in these matters. Upon this acknowledgment, if I shou'd propose now the breaking off our present conference, you wou'd perhaps think I am like one that has an uneasiness of conscience rising strongly upon him. He is unwilling to break off a long habit, and conquer entirely a long prejudice from education, and is therefore glad of any pretence to delay his thorough conversion and profession of faith. But in reality, if I mind you, it is past seven by my watch, and therefore my time to go; it is only

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<sup>m</sup> *Continuus ejus usus in Allegoriam & Ænigmata exit.*  
Lib. 8. Cap. 6. post initium.

DIAL. to stand to my word. Two days hence  
III. we will pursue the point, if you please.



EUDOX. I will expect you about the same time as usually, in the afternoon. Adieu. If you please, *Cleander*, we will make a visit to your nephew.

CLEAND. Agreed. He will be surprized to hear the news of *Critomachus's* present disposition, &c.

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THE



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T H E

# FOURTH DIALOGUE,

B E T W E E N

## CRITOMACHUS, EUDOXUS, *and* CLEANDER.

CRITOM. **I**T was not easy for me to get away from the company I was engaged in to-day at dinner. But my word was given. And besides, my inclination drew me. For I am truly like those I mention'd, who, being upon a conversion, though the final resolution is hard to be taken, yet when the first difficulties are broken, like no conversation so well, as where they can discourse their remaining doubts. Be pleas'd then, *Eudoxus*, to pursue the point you propos'd.

EUDOX. To be plain then, I think several are very defective in matter of truth and proportion of their thoughts and expressions. *Callicrates*, complaining of the vanity of men, says, *we love to distinguish ourselves*  
I by

DIAL. *by excesses, and be great in disproportions;*

IV. *as if it was more creditable to be a monster than a man.* This gives an expressive character of those, who wanting the support of his genius, will however be writing in surprising, disjointed Phrases, and chiefly seeking what I think he calls *tumour of expression*, make every where a strange disproportion. Their every sentence stands up for itself, resolved as it were to be the highest and largest of the pack. Hence they run beyond all bounds and measure of discretion and truth.

CLEAND. *Boileau* speaks of. those who will be great in that mistaken grandeur and disproportion, in the following terms<sup>a</sup>:

*Some fiery Authors mad beyond defence,  
Still seek for wit beyond all common sense;  
And hold it mean to think as others do,  
Or talk like fellow-mortals here below.  
They think in writing there no wit can be,  
No noble turn without Hyperbole.*

*Love, war, or pleasure, or what'e'er they  
treat,*

*A haughty fancy and unruly heat  
Still makes th' expression and the thought  
too great.*

*Thus by excess they fall immensely short  
Of common sense, and only serve for sport,*

<sup>a</sup> Art of Poetry, Canto 1.

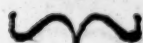
## ACCURACY of STYLE.

115

*While ev'ry sober man spectator sits,  
Smiling to see these false Italian wits  
Cherish their folly, and be fondly glad  
To find themselves superlatively mad.*

DIAL.

IV.



CRITOM. *To fall short by excess*, under favour, Sir, seems an odd expression. But let that pass, lest you should take me for a Critick. As to the present point, there is certainly a kind of writing frequent with the *Italians*, that wou'd be insupportable in *English*. Yet I will be bold to say we are not to be bound up to all the rules of the *French* Criticks. If our language bears less elevation than the *Italian*, it bears more than the *French*. And therefore I do not think our authors are to be condemn'd upon the verdict of *Boileau* or *Bouhours*. As in other matters, 'tis often easy to observe that those very things which pass for national perfections, take their origine from opposite defects, (as in *Holland* they are forced to be neat, not to be overrun with vermine) so it is with the nature and genius of several particular languages, and the methods of writing in different nations. A *Frenchman*, who pretends to exactness of judgment, shall be always insisting upon the excellences of a sweet, easy, natural Style. Any thought that has the least air of an exaggeration, shall not escape his censure. And why? but that being naturally light, they easily run into extravagances unless kept severely within bounds. This,



DIAL. and the character of their language, makes  
 IV. them almost incapable of success in venturing at sublime expressions. Conscious of these defects, they turn their endeavours to a smoother eloquence, which is rather agreeable than great.

CLEAND. I will not deny but the *French* eloquence is a greater argument that their fancy is too strong, and their language too weak, than that their judgments are naturally more exact than their neighbours. Reflecting upon *Balzac* will make this opinion more probable. No *French* author perhaps had a greater inclination, or used more endeavours to maintain the dignity of a sublime strength of Style, yet certainly he often goes into monstrous imaginations, and to appear great, runs into vast disproportion of thought and expression. And here I can't but observe, that one may much question a very common opinion, which makes *Voiture* the greater wit of the two. I shou'd rather believe *Balzac* was inferior to him in judgment more than in wit, and that he did not so well understand the strength and compass both of the language and genius of his nation ; laying more stress and weight upon both, if I may use that expression, than they would bear. In a word, *Balzac* is generally exorbitant and scarce ever great, or sublime ; whereas *Voiture*, more perfectly acquainted with the genius  
 of

of the *French* language and wit, is commonly natural, and as it were, genteel, though seldom sublime. Hence I believe he is admired for knowing he cou'd not be great without danger of excess, and the other is condemn'd while he mistakes extravagances and *gasconades* for sublime wit and expression. DIAL. IV.

EUDOX. I was always of that opinion. And speaking more universally, I seldom read *Balzac* or other high-flown authors, but I call to mind a very little gentleman, who by a strutting walk, and high-heel'd shoes, thought himself a proper man. He would have been less pointed at, and had walked the streets with less danger of falling, had he been content with his natural inches. Thus the natural expressions of an author, to whom nature has given no great height of genius, wou'd make him pass in the publick with less censure, than those so high, but so affected and dangerous. I forget who it is, but somebody compares that way of writing, to walking upon stilts. And I wonder it is not more reflected upon in *England*, that Mr. *Bayes* has made it very uncreditable to put up for an author that will *elevate, and surprize, and all that.*

CRITOM. It must be reflected on also, that because a club of bantering wits, have

DIAL. been applauded in their burlesquing humourous way of criticizing a very eminent genius, it does not follow that all our authors must be possess'd with a *panick* fear of every elevated expression. A noble vigour and boldness of words is often requisite to give strength and grace to the thought. At other times the thoughts themselves absolutely require more bold than regular expressions. Some Subjects too, in this, no less than was said of harmony and smoothness of Style, must be in a stronger light. In such occasions (for that is always most eloquent which is most proper to the circumstances) a fierceness of words, will please the most. And as in drawing up an army, the regularity of figure must be neglected to take the advantage of a rising ground, so the exact proportion of ordinary rules, must be neglected to raise the periods above the common level.

CLEAND. Your comparison puts me in mind of him who placed a considerable part of his troops upon so high and distant a post, that they cou'd not come time enough to succour him in the plain. I fear the like often happens in those Styles. Eminent expressions are often too far remov'd from the body of the discourse; and serve only for a distant sight, not for a real support.



EUDOX. Another mighty inconvenience of affecting those elevations, is the obscurity which is apt to attend those airy flights. For such authors generally, as *Boileau* says <sup>b</sup>,

*Do by their boldly venturing too high,  
Lose both themselves and reader in the sky.*

And when I find my author is hardly return'd within ken, but by a sudden new flight he is presently invisible again, I cry out with the same Poet <sup>c</sup>,

*I hate an author that obscurely writes,  
And carries out of reach his airy flights.*

CRITOM. An allowance however must be given for some certain subjects which require a greater freedom, or of their own nature can't admit that clearness and perspicuity which must be in other occasions, wherein *Aristotle* <sup>d</sup> has reason to place perspicuity as the first and most necessary point of writing well. Yet *metaphysical* notions, excess of passion, as of rage or despair, perplexities of mind, speculative and contemplative reflections, and the like, can hardly ever be totally free from something of obscurity and confusion.

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<sup>b</sup> Art Poétique, Canto 1.

<sup>c</sup> *Boileau*, *ibid.*

<sup>d</sup> *Definita sit orationis virtus, ut perspicua sit, &c.* Rhet. lib. 3. cap. 2.

DIAL.

IV.

 EUDOX. Then let such things be confin'd  
 to scholastick dissertations, and such books  
 as no one cares for but those who love to  
 have their understandings non-plus'd, and are  
 most satisfied when they see the least of the  
 writer's meaning. For some such there are.  
 And I am very well assured that one com-  
 mending extreamly a preacher he admired,  
 gave this instance of his great talent<sup>e</sup>, *He*  
*reads Spanish Authors, and has such high*  
*conceits, that I my self can't understand*  
*him.* As for the thing it self, tho' some  
 subjects are of themselves sublime, and  
 therein a reader may mistake the obscurity  
 of the thing for that of expression; yet  
 commonly it is more from the author's ge-  
 nius, than from the nature of his subject,  
 that he is dark and confused, and partly  
 from want of judgment in aiming at higher  
 and sublimer matters than he is able to ma-  
 nage, and screwing his expressions to sup-  
 ply the want of conception. Such writers  
 should take the advice of *Boileau*<sup>f</sup>;

*Learn then to think e'er you begin to write,*  
*If you wou'd do't with profit and delight.*  
*When in the mind the thoughts digested lie,*  
*The expression then will easily comply.*

---

<sup>e</sup> *Legit Autores Hispanicos, & habet altissimos conceptus, quos ipsi non possumus intelligere. Ita N. N.*

<sup>f</sup> *Art. Poétique, Canto 1.*

*For*

## ACCURACY of STYLE.

121

*For all obscurity comes from the mind,  
And we are seldom at a loss to find  
Terms which may please both intellect and  
ear,  
When to ourselves we've fram'd our notions  
clear.*

DIAL.  
IV.

To which must be added however, that there is a certain character of wit which is in a manner naturally obscure and unintelligible, as the same Author observes.

*Some certain wits are nat'rally obscure,  
And in their darkness every way secure,  
In spite of reason sullenly stand good  
'Gainst all attempts of being understood.*

CLEAND. To this purpose of a clear intelligible expression naturally flowing from a right conception, you have doubtless seen it observed that the *French*, for an understanding person say, *une personne entendüe*, *a person understood*; as if it were the same thing to be easily understood, and to have a right understanding.

CRITOM. Well, Gentlemen, but will you not grant at least there is sometimes a kind of obscurity not unlike, in its effects, to shades in a picture, which serve to distinguish the piece, and give greater lustre to the other colours?

EUDOX.



DIAL.

IV.

~ EUDOX. It is a pity to ruin so pleasing a comparison. Yet, under favour, Sir, I do not well conceive how an obscure sentence can add any lustre to the following. For how can I understand the second period better, because I knew not what to make of the first?

CRITOM. My meaning is not of periods impenetrably obscure; but rather of such as express sufficiently all that shou'd be said, and yet include more than they clearly express. The great commendation *Pliny* gives of a Painter, I take for the character of a good writer; that in all his works more was always understood than painted<sup>h</sup>. Thus in writings, room must be left for the reader's wit and sharpness in seeing beyond the surface of the words. For as I have read somewhere, we are then doubly pleased with an Author, who while thus we see his wit, makes us reflect upon our own; and gives us occasion to flatter ourselves, that we penetrate farther than every vulgar reader, who, as we imagine, will never take the hint and carry it to the thoughts we have upon it.

EUDOX. Unless I mistake the place and meaning of *Pliny*, he adds<sup>i</sup>, that altho'

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<sup>h</sup> *In omnibus ejus operibus, plus semper intelligitur quam pingitur.* Plin.

<sup>i</sup> *Et cum ars summa sit, ingenium tamen supra artem est.* Ibid.  
the

the art of that great painter was singular, yet DIAL.  
his genius, and the humouring his pieces, IV.  
was above his art. Take this into the for-  
mer part, and I will grant it to be the true  
character of a good writer. But then I must  
beg leave to think, this will never be found  
in those, whose phrases seem perpetually to  
be of a studied and excessive greatness. And  
when *Pliny* or others say, it is artful to  
write so as to signify more than is fully ex-  
press'd, their meaning is not, that the  
reader must be put to the trouble of a long  
conjecture to find what the author wou'd be  
at. On the contrary, they always demand  
a clear, and perspicuous elocution; tho'  
sometimes a nice touch is better than a large  
explication. In a word; *Oracles* and *Pro-  
phesies* have prescription for obscurity, but  
few will be long of a humour to consult  
authors who seem pretenders to the like pri-  
vilege by writing in the Style of *Riddles*.  
It is not short sentences will make them  
supportable.

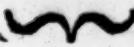
CLEAND. Perhaps they hope their short  
sentences will be taken by the rule of him  
that says<sup>k</sup>,

" *For brevity is always good,*  
" *Whether it be, or be not understood.*

---

<sup>k</sup> Hudibras.

DIAL. Tho' to speak more seriously; however short

IV.  their sentences may be, if they are obscure, they are too long, and the Author is *loquacious*. For to talk without being intelligible, seems to be meer talking for talking sake. Otherwise, if they had no mind to be understood, the shorter way had been to say nothing, according to that Epigram<sup>1</sup>,

*Quid juvat obscuris involvere scripta  
latebris?*

*Ne pateant animi sensa tacere potes.*

If you design'd not to be understood,  
To say just nothing were at least as good.

EUDOX. Where this obscurity often occurs in treating of matters otherwise dangerous, it has this good at least, that part of the harm is hidden. Tho' sometimes indeed obscure hints do more harm, by setting the imagination at work in a stronger way than if the expression had been clear. And then such writings are like the Cypress-tree, which *Pliny* says, has bitter leaves, no fruit, and a bad shade<sup>m</sup>.

CRITOM. There is another sort of obscurity which I think you have in a manner overlook'd, and yet I own I have sometimes

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<sup>1</sup> Sammarth. in *delectu Epigrammatum*.

<sup>m</sup> *Folio amara, fructu supervacua, baccis torva, & ne umbra quidem gratiosa.* Plin.



found it very disagreeable. When for ex- DIAL.  
ample the words are common and obvious, IV.  
and there seems to be a meaning which dis-  
appears when you come to a closer examen.  
May I not by your example compare them  
to a horrid Rock of which *Pliny* gives this  
strange account; that if you only push'd  
it with your finger, you might move it;  
but it wou'd not be stirr'd if you tried to  
push it with your whole body<sup>n</sup>. If you  
touch slightly upon such places, you may  
stir up something of a meaning; if you  
press close upon them, you will make no-  
thing of them. And if I found myself  
dissatisfied where such places occur'd but  
seldom, you may easily imagine I never  
cared for those Authors where every thing  
almost is obscure. I am so averse from  
labour, that I shou'd not care for gold if it  
were to cost me much digging.

CLEAND. Since *Eudoxus* gave me the  
applications of *Milton*, whereof I spoke to  
you, *Critomachus*, the next day, methinks I  
would express the difficulty of passing  
through the obscurity and confusion of some  
Authors by what is said in *Milton* by *Sa-  
tan*, of the journey he made through the  
*Chaos*.

---

<sup>n</sup> *Juxta Arpasa oppidum Asiæ cautes stat horrenda, uno di-  
gitto mobilis, eadem si toto corpore impellatur resistit. Plin.  
Hist. lib. 2. cap. 46.*

DIAL.

IV.

° Long were to tell

~~~~~ What I have done, what suffer'd, with what  
pain

Voyaged th' unreal, vast, unbounded deep  
Of horrible confusion ..... I

Toil'd out my uncouth passage, forced to ride  
Th' untractable Abyss, plung'd in the womb  
Of unoriginal night, and Chaos wilde,  
That jealous of their secrets fiercely oppos'd  
My journey strange.

The misery is, that after so sad a journey through dark Authors, you oftentimes have not the luck of *Satan*, to meet with any thing better at the end of the *Chaos*. I have formerly been in the humour of reading such books, but have since regretted the time and pains I have lost. Which makes me now extremely averse from any thing of obscurity which cost me heretofore so dear, with little or no advantage.

CRITOM. The humour of loving obscure Authors is the sad fate of many. One part of the reason, I hinted at before. I will add another from *Elizalde* a *Spanish Jesuit*, and a very subtile one; and he designs in it, a fling both at *Aristotle* and his admirers. *I believe*, says he, *one reason that makes*

him admired, is because to understand any thing in him, is much the same as to invent, and we are apt to love and admire our own inventions<sup>p</sup>. DIAL. IV.

EUDOX. Some justify *Aristotle* even in that. The reason however why some are pleas'd with obscure Authors, is ingenious. But to proceed in our present matter: Even abstracting from the obscurity which generally attends the pretended sententious way of writing, so much admired by many, it is moreover very faulty in not giving the thoughts their due proportion and extent. *Manzini*<sup>q</sup> says (which you will wonder at from an *Italian*, and particularly from him) it is of all methods of writing the very worst and most insufferable. The comparison he uses upon this occasion is very significant, and formerly used by *Quintilian*<sup>r</sup>: When a field, or tree, bears too great a quantity of fruit, little or none comes to maturity because they hinder one another. Nothing comes to its full greatness, for want of room to grow and spread. So sentences, when set too thick, hinder the force and beauty of one another, and are either too

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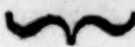
<sup>p</sup> Elizalde. *De formâ vera Religionis inveniendâ.*

<sup>q</sup> Preface to his *Academical Discourses*.

<sup>r</sup> *Densitas earum obstat invicem, ut in satis omnibus, fructibusque arborum nihil ad justam magnitudinem adolescere potest, quod loco in quem crescat caret.* Quint. lib. 8. cap. 5.



DIAL. imperfectly express'd to be intelligible, or if

IV. intelligible, not graceful at least, because  
 throng'd, and crowd'd together.

CLEAND. I have found upon experience the truth of what you also signified to me before, and what *Quintilian* says, I think in the same place<sup>f</sup>, that an over-great desire of being sententious, necessitates in a manner to fall into puerilities, and many weak, cold, insignificant things; while number, not choice is their concern. They give their every period something like the air and turn, but not the solidity of an *Apothegm*. Which method can't fail to grow tedious and fulsome, when the first surprize is a little over. For that constraint and screwing up of the Style, *crosses upon nature*, and breeds a great disgust of those writings which were most admired, till reflection made it appear, that in those very periods which seem'd so full, there is a mere emptiness of thought. May I not say, at least of these expressions, compared with others of a much plainer and less promising aspect, what *Osborn* says<sup>t</sup>, that in *Spain* men look wiser than they are, and in

---

<sup>f</sup> *Solas captanti sententias multas necesse est dicere leves, frigidas, ineptas. Non enim potest esse delectus ubi de numero laboratur . . . . . Nec multas plerique sententias dicunt, sed omnia tanquam sententias.* Quint. *ibid.*

<sup>t</sup> Advice, Sec. 1. §. 35.

*England* they are wiser than they look. DIAL.  
Upon my word, *Eudoxus*, you wou'd not IV.  
imagine how uneasy are grown to me those  
promising, but false Styles, that *tantalize*  
one with a hoped-for taste of solid sense,  
and then put one off with a touch, that  
leaves you wishing for more, but wishing in  
vain. Even of the very best of them one  
may say, as I have been told *Callicrates* in  
another work <sup>u</sup> says of *Seneca* : *he moves*  
*by start and sally. He flashes a hint in*  
*your face and disappears. This looks like*  
*an apparition of philosophy.* Thus says he ;  
and this, say I, makes me almost as uneasy  
as if I were haunted with an apparition of  
a Ghost.

EUDOX. I must beg of you, *Cleander*, to  
get me a sight of that, and what other  
books *Callicrates* has publish'd. For tho' I  
do not admire in general that way of Style,  
yet he has so much good sense and wit, as  
one may easily perceive from this Book, that  
I shall be very glad to see whatever comes  
from so ingenious a pen. Now as for those  
apparitions, they put me in mind of a com-  
parison I have read I know not where <sup>w</sup>,  
that some sorts of Styles are like *Phantoms*  
*of Magick*, which astonish the imagination,

<sup>u</sup> Preface to *Antoninus's Meditations*.

<sup>w</sup> I think it is *Balzac's*.


DIAL. but please only vicious and depraved cu-

IV. riosities. This cannot, I believe, be more  
 properly applied to any sort of Style than to  
 that we are now upon. And as those de-  
 praved curiosities gain most upon soft heads  
 and hard consciences, so those flashes, and  
 hints, and apparitions of this magical Style,  
 are most valued by weak judgments and  
 strong fancies. However I wou'd not have  
 you take this for a reflection upon *Calli-  
 crates* or all his admirers. It may happen as  
 well in matter of writing as in that of reli-  
 gion, that some sensible and worthy men,  
 by the misfortune of education join'd with  
 an unhappy interest, may be blinded, and  
 engaged in errors; tho' commonly the un-  
 thinking, or the wicked, make the numbers  
 of every false religion. The like, I say, hap-  
 pens often in matter of writing: even sen-  
 sible men, whether by too great an affecta-  
 tion or ambition of shewing wit, or of  
 pleasing the publick in corrupt but prevail-  
 ing humours, or some other such motives,  
 may fall into vast mistakes, and by degrees  
 increase, not in the number only, but in  
 the opinion and value of their errors. Nay,  
 oftentimes it is a sharpness of wit that de-  
 praves the Style. *Chrysippus*, says *Seneca*<sup>x</sup>,  
*was a great man, and of an acute wit. But*  
*the edge of it was so fine, that every thing*

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<sup>x</sup> In L'Estrange's *Abstract*, Epist. 2.

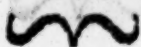


turned it : and he might be said in truth DIAL.  
 rather to prick the subject that he handled, IV.  
 than to pierce it through. This is often the   
 character of *Seneca* himself, and common-  
 ly that of sententious Authors. They never  
 follow on a thought to a just length. From  
 plain expressions (which generally they  
 avoid) you are brought immediately to an  
 unusual metaphor ; which is scarce finish'd,  
 but there follows a quite disparate notion.  
 Then an affectation of *opposites*, which is  
 a continual source of false eloquence, makes  
 them seem acute, but you soon perceive  
 the edge was too fine not to be easily turn'd.  
 That same affectation makes it seem, as if  
 the quarrelsome humour of the age had pos-  
 sessed some writers. Not only meaning  
 their quarrels with one another, but also the  
 wrangling of their own words. In some  
 of them you will scarce find a quiet sentence  
 in a whole book. All is sharp points and  
 oppositions. Every word stands in battle  
 against it's brisk *antithesis*, and is sure to  
 meet a sharp dapper adversary before the end  
 of the sentence. *Solinus* <sup>v</sup> tells us of a  
 stone, and it is counted a Gem too, by  
 name *Syderitis*, which breeds discord where-  
 ever it comes. Certainly these men have  
 mixt in their Ink the dust of this stone,  
 since almost every period is *antithetical* and

---

<sup>v</sup> *Hist. Nat. cap. 40. Syderitis maleficus, quocunque infe-  
 ratur, discordias excitat.*

DIAL. quarrelling one part with the other, and frequently jarring with sense and reason.



CRITOM. I perceive you are both strangely averse from concise Styles. Nor will I deny but they have great part of the inconveniences you have mention'd; yet methinks it is better to lie under those inconveniences, than return to long rolling periods, that fill each of them a page; where reason is spread too far to retain it's force, and is commonly lost in a croud of words. Sense seldom thrives under a multiplicity of terms, which are like a luxuriancy of leaves and branches not carefully pruned, that hinder the grapes from recovering warmth enough to come to maturity. 'Tis with long periods as with long bodies. They are generally the weakest, and commonly not more languid than obscure; because clogg'd with more than one *parenthesis*, and with thoughts foreign from the main subject, and burthensome to the memory. They tire you out with a long expectation, and always come too late with their sense. Whereas in a short Style, you have the advantage of knowing immediately what the Author designs.

CLEAND. You will perhaps wonder if I tell you one is longer a learning the meaning of these concise writers, than of those who are diffuse. Yet so it is. For, as I have already told

told you, they only *tantalize* with a slight touch, or as *Callicrates* expressed it, they *start*, and *sally*, and *hint*, and *flash*, and *disappear*. They never give you a distinct view of their meaning. By never allowing thoughts their full length of expression, they say them over twenty different ways, but never say it full out, tiring you with a great many unfinished turns, ever beginning and never concluding. *Bartoli*<sup>2</sup> speaking to this purpose, compares such writers to those who beginning daily new methods of life, never properly lead any course of life, while they are continually beginning to live.

*Victuros agimus semper, neque vivimus unquam*———says *Manilius*.

*Dicturos agimus semper, neque dicimus unquam,*

says *Bartoli*, who is very happy and fertile in that way of applications.

CRITOM. Well, I declare this is a very unexpected *Paradox*, that shortest Styles should of all Styles be the longest. Yet, besides that I have heard of *long-short-lung'd Seneca*, upon this account; I have observed in late Authors, that altho' I did not reflect whence it proceeded, yet they seem'd either long in concluding, or not to conclude at all, while every line look'd very like a con-

<sup>2</sup> *Huomo di lettere, sub finem.*



DIAL. cluding stroke. And to speak the truth,

IV. I perceive they were often beginning the same thing, and after all still left it unfinished, because the whole extent of the notion wou'd not enter into the limits of a short concise period. But now, tho' I long to hear your opinion of exactness of truth in writings, yet before we leave the point I propos'd of diffuse Styles, pray what do you think of that way of writing which is commonly call'd a *Torrent of Eloquence*?

EUDOX. *Stratonicus* being ask'd whether round or long ships were the securest, answer'd, *Those which keep in the haven*. Thus when ask'd whether short or long Styles are best, I will beg leave to answer, those that keep within limits, secure from the inconveniences of either. If you will still demand a more distinct answer, I will desire *Cleander's* leave to declare against the long *Port-Royal* Style.

CLEAND. You suppose me to be, I perceive, in my former opinion of those Authors. But let me assure you, I have abated very much of my former admiration. I shall take an occasion hereafter to discourse with you more at large upon them. At present, as to their long Style, I think it less to be compared to a torrent, than to a dull, languid stream.

EUDOX.

EUDOX. Their Style I particularly mention'd upon a smile of *Critomachus*, which made me judge he meant those gentlemen who continually used to cry one another up for *Torrents of Eloquence*. Now to speak more universally of long periods, I think it unnecessary to say much. For the chief faults in that kind, have been sufficiently touch'd. I will add, that nothing can be more insipid, than to run all notions and subjects into a prefix'd length of expression, and force every thought to fill a set number of lines. For it makes the discourse both weak and tedious, as was already observed, and puts the reader's memory, breath, and patience, to a very ungrateful trial. Such are, for example, two of the first periods you meet with in Mr. *Dodwell's Letters of Advice*<sup>a</sup>. I fell upon them at a meer casual opening of the book. They are both immediately together. The first has two large parentheses, and six and thirty lines; for I had the curiosity to count them. The second has three parentheses, and about four and forty lines. Now as for such furious Authors (for *Cicero*<sup>b</sup> gives them no better name) even where they are free from downright flatness, and seem to run on

<sup>a</sup> Letter 1. §. 8, 9.

<sup>b</sup> *Quid est enim tam furiosum quàm verborum vel optimorum sonitus inanis, nullâ subjectâ sententiâ.* Cic. de Orat. lib. 2.

DIAL. with impetuosity of Style, as they term it ;

IV. yet they seldom take their rise, their course, or their fall, from the nature of their subject. Where that requires it, let the discourse be vehement. But let it be vehement only in proportion with the matter. A moderation must be always kept, not to degenerate into meer hurry, noise and tumult ; and if you will let me use the expression, not to rant, and swell, and foam in every thing alike, without measure or rule. In a word, it must be as *Tasso*<sup>c</sup> says of *Godfrey's* leading his army, That it was swift, but regularly swift.

*Rapido sì, mà rapido con legge.*

Rapidity of Style, when irregular, is only posting on to nonsense.

CLEAND. Upon these, and the like reflections, we shall now all sufficiently agree, that altho' a *Torrent of Pleasure* is a consecrated expression, and a *Torrent of Eloquence* has the authority of a long prescription to pass for a commendation, yet as both those kinds of torrents wou'd rather destroy than please, unless proportion'd to their subjects, so the latter is too seldom secured from danger, to be the endeavour of a discreet Author. And therefore generally speaking, we shall each of us conclude with *Boileau*<sup>d</sup>,

<sup>c</sup> *Gierusalemme.* Cant. 3. Stanza 2.

<sup>d</sup> *Art of Poetry.* Canto 1.



*I'm far more pleas'd to see a river glide  
Smoothly along the verdant meadow's side,  
Than rapid torrents, which from mountains  
thrown,  
With noise and violence bear all things  
down;  
Destroying countries where they overflow,  
And carrying desolation as they go.*

EUDOX. Nor do I question but we shall hereafter always think, not torrents, but noble rivers are a fitter example of Style; according to those verses so much, and so deservedly admir'd by Mr. *Dryden* in Sir *John Denham*, where speaking of the *Thames*, he says °,

*O could I flow like thee, and make thy  
stream  
My great example, as it is my theme!  
Tho' deep, yet clear; tho' gentle, yet not  
dull;  
Strong, without rage; without o'erflowing,  
full.*

To conclude, if ever any thing of impetuosity is allowable, it must be still according to the nature of water, which if it meets with steep and broken ways, precipitates down with noise; and, if I may

---

° In *Cooper's Hill*.

DIAL. say it, foams at the fall: But if it meets  
 IV. with a plain, runs quietly and smoothly  
 ~~~~~ on, with a clear and equal course. Thus  
 periods are to be rapid and broken, or  
 smooth and equal, according to the subject  
 upon which they run.

CRITOM. I can't tell whether we shall  
 come so near an agreement concerning  
 exactness of thought and truth. For me-  
 thinks I foresee you will be more severe  
 in this than in any of the former points.

EUDOX. And certainly, since truth and  
 right reason are preferable to words, it ought  
 not to seem strange, if in those there is  
 required a greater care and exactness. To  
 be plain then, I think there ought to be  
 almost the same severity in other pieces of  
 eloquence, as in sermons, in which the ju-  
 dicious *Rapin*<sup>f</sup> will allow no thought, tho'  
 ever so pretty in appearance, unless it has  
 solidity and truth. Tell me what you please  
 of agreeable illusions, deceitful charms,  
 pleasing cheats, happy errors, and all that.  
 Let Poets have the use of them, and under  
 many restrictions too. In serious writings  
 I hate that juggling, and detest an Author,  
 who thinks me easy enough to be pleas'd  
 with sounding nonsense, or to be convinc'd  
 with a jingling folly, or a quaint and airy

---

<sup>f</sup> Reflections upon the Eloquence of the Pulpit.

flam, or those expressions which I use to call hypocritical. Such I mean, as are bad, but seem good. For they are also like hypocrites in their fate; and accordingly most detested when once discovered. Plain down-right nonsense may be pitied. But nonsense cover'd with the mask of sense, is never to be pardon'd, whether the mask falls off by itself, or is pull'd off upon suspicion. It is like coining false money, and shou'd be a capital crime in the republick of learning.

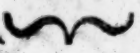
DIAL.  
IV.

CRITOM. But, Sir, that severity in what you call exactness of thought and truth, would be too great a constraint, and hinder the sublime pleasure of *Exaggerations* or *Amplifications*, which sure you will allow in true eloquence.

EUDOX. As for constraint, methinks it shou'd not be thought a great one to require reason and truth. And as for exaggerations, they must be allowed some place in eloquence. But then extravagance must not pass for exaggeration. Even poets must keep within bounds. Besides, true rhetorical exaggerations or amplifications don't consist in false additional reasons, but in setting off the true reason with something of a greater air than it absolutely requires. Whatever is beyond a moderate liberty of enlarging upon truth, is to be rejected. In short,



DIAL. short, nothing shou'd be pass'd over as an

IV. allowable exaggeration, unless both grounded  
 upon a solid truth, and supported by verisimilitude.

CLEAND. Methinks what is commonly meant by exaggerations, is not so properly the fault of those Styles we have chiefly consider'd. The concise eloquence is not of that enlarging kind. Not that I think only a long diffusive Style can exaggerate; for the vastest exaggerations may be in single metaphors and words: but that it is properly in a kind of *Asiatick* eloquence, they enter as it were with licence even of Censors.

CRITOM. You have prevented me in what I was going to offer in defence of our late Authors. If you mean that libertine eloquence which diffuses itself through all the vulgar figures of enlarging, most certainly they cannot be found guilty of exaggerations. But taking the word for a certain noble boldness of expression, which raises and enlarges a thought, it is, I own, their common practice. But sure that is no fault.

EUDOX. Their hardy and venturesome expressions, what with some lucky hits of metaphor, and smartness of *antithesis*, or the like, does often give a kind of vigour and *Brio* (if the word is sufficiently naturaliz'd)

raliz'd) to their lines, and must be com-  
mended when they pass not the bounds of  
discretion. But when in their bold flights,  
you have meer sophistry and founding fal-  
lacy, the finer the words are, the more they  
will displease.

DIAL.  
IV.

CRITOM. Granting the fallacy, if clear,  
will hardly be excused; yet if plausibly  
manag'd, it will please, even when you  
find it does not convince.

EUDOX. It may so in little slight poems,  
in compliments of ceremony, and such other  
compositions. But hardly ever in serious  
subjects. Perhaps not even in great and  
noble poems, excepting some certain places  
wherein it sufficiently appears the poet  
wou'd unbend his own, and his reader's  
thoughts, by using the liberty of his art,  
which being licens'd for fable, may be al-  
low'd to trespass upon truth. It is the un-  
disputed privilege of *Parnassus*. Thus  
every one will allow, and approve these  
lines of *Milton*<sup>g</sup>,

*Now gentle gales  
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense  
Native perfumes, and whisper whence  
they stole  
Those balmy spoils.*

---

<sup>g</sup> *Lib. 4. ver. 157.*

DIAL. In him many such strokes are met with,  
 IV. wherein you see the falsity, and yet are  
 ~~~~~ pleased. As again in the same book, where  
 he amuses you agreeably in the description  
 of Paradise, leading you through

*Umbrageous grotts and caves  
 Of cool recesss, o'er which the mantling vine  
 Lays forth her purple grape, and gently  
 creeps  
 Luxuriant.*

With the charms of these walks, and with  
 viewing the other beauties of the place, he  
 so amuses you, that even the mixture of  
 heathenish fables in a sacred subject, is al-  
 most overlook'd in the insinuating air of  
 his verses, and you startle not, you are even  
 pleas'd to meet *Pan* leading up a dance of  
 eternal spring, with the *Graces* and *Hours*,  
 in these following lines <sup>h</sup>:

*Aires, vernal aires,  
 Breathing the smell of field and grove,  
 attune  
 The trembling leaves, while universal Pan  
 Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,  
 Lead on th' eternal spring.*

Where something of this nature does not  
 give a particular licence, nothing but exact  
 truth is to have place, especially in prose.

<sup>h</sup> *Lib. eodem. ver. 264.*



CRITOM. Give me leave to repeat what I have already said, that severity in this, as in other points, is often carried too far. By a habit or humour of examining every thing by certain speculative rules, people come to call in question the common practice, and what has passed for the brightest strokes of the best writers; and to condemn those thoughts which have been handed down from past ages, and constantly received with the greatest approbation. For example; *Pompey*, you know, when some important affairs of the common-wealth required his departing from a maritime town, and every body represented to him, that in so hard and stormy weather, he could not go to sea, without imminent danger of his life, answer'd, *My voyage is necessary, but my life is not so*. This answer, which is much commended by *Callicrates*, and for many ages past, had been look'd upon as equally noble and smart, is condemn'd by *Balsac*<sup>i</sup> for having the appearance only, not the reality of an ingenious reply. The peremptory critick gives this reason. Because, says he, it destroys it self, and implies a contradiction. For since life is the origin of all human actions, it follows that *Pompey* cou'd not embark, unless he lived; this being a contradiction, say the criticks. Very

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<sup>i</sup> Vide *Manière de Penfer. Dial. 1.*

DIAL. philosophically indeed ! But how can they  
 IV. imagine the world, who so long applauded  
 ~~~~~ that answer of *Pompey*, shou'd never re-  
 flect that to embark and act upon the or-  
 ders of the *Senate*, it was pretty necessary  
 to be alive.

CLEAND. And certainly it is not hard to  
 conceive that to save his honour, and shew  
 his deference to the senate, it might be more  
 necessary to go to sea, with danger of his  
 life, than to secure his life by neglect of his  
 duty, or of his honour. Which is mani-  
 festly the meaning of his reply.

EUDOX. It is by that very reason that  
*Bouhours*<sup>k</sup>, who professes so great a nicety in  
 that kind, defends that answer of *Pompey*.  
*Balzac* especially, shou'd take little free-  
 dom in Criticisms of that nature. For he  
 will generally be less able to bear the like  
 severity : As when he proves it is not in-  
 convenient to be a prisoner, because some  
 people keep their chamber of their own ac-  
 cord. But not to mention such small mat-  
 ters as this, for such occur almost perpetu-  
 ally in him ; let us take an example of a  
 higher nature. When *Marius* in his mis-  
 fortunes was forced to hide himself in the  
 ruins of *Carthage*, Sure, says he, that

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<sup>k</sup> Ibidem.

great but ruin'd city, and that great but DIAL. unfortunate man, view'd each other with IV. astonishment; that *Marius* comforted *Carthage*, and *Carthage*, *Marius*; and the mutual comparison of their miseries made both of them pardon the Gods and Fortune. He carries the point still farther, and adds: That *Carthage*, after that example of *Marius*, could no longer wonder at her own ruin; nor *Marius* dare to bear his misfortunes with impatience in the presence of *Carthage*. Here if *Balzac* were to be examin'd by that rigour of truth he exacts of *Pompey*, this sad interview between unfortunate *Marius* and poor *Carthage* would make a very odd figure. For tho' both *Lucan* and *Velleius Paterculus*<sup>1</sup> have something of the same thought, yet they only touch upon it, without making it childish by carrying it too far.

CLEAND. What *Balzac* could say in defence of this place, I know not. But I know he would not mend the matter by saying, as he does of some in another place, that we are *Judges without judgment, and Authors without authority*. To pardon him this wretched *Pun*, it must be granted he is very often guilty of falsity; that is, of advancing beyond truth, and falling into unpardonable sophistry.

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<sup>1</sup> *Apud Bouhours, ibid.*



DIAL.

IV.

CRITOM. I shall not undertake *Balzac's* defence, tho' you both seem resolved to join his cause with that of several modern writers. I had rather pass over that, and ask you, *Eudoxus*, an example wherein a Thought, tho' in rigour false, nay even ridiculous if brought into Syllogism, yet fails not to be receiv'd with applause. And moreover, I wou'd know the reason why they may sometimes please.

EUDOX. In grave subjects, and with a judicious reader, I shall not easily grant there is any such thing as pleasing with false reasons when they are discover'd. In other occasions they may please when managed with moderation, and when only presented to pleasure the fancy, without any design of imposing upon the understanding. *Voiture* frequently succeeds in that kind. Writing to a *French* officer who was taken prisoner, he tells him that " he signalizes himself " every where, even in those occasions " which are unfortunate to others; and " bids him by no means complain of fortune, since if she is not on his side, she " takes care to have him on the side she favours; and that at the end of all Battles " he is always on the victorious side." Here the *Sophism* is certainly great enough. Yet all things consider'd, I believe even Mr. *Girac* wou'd not condemn the compliment.

CLEAND.

CLEAND. So true it is that every thing is graceful when used in its proper way and place. Thoughts otherwise equally false, and otherwise much alike, are very different accordingly as they are used, and what is insupportable in some occasions, is graceful in others, or at least excusable. Thus every body sees the detestable childishness of these two verses of *Theophile*<sup>m</sup> ;

*Ha ! voicy le poignard qui du sang de son maître*

*S'est souillé lachement ! Il en rougit le traître.*

Ha ! here's the sword which his own master  
kill'd,

The traitor blushes with the blood he spill'd.

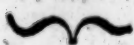
And yet when *Pliny* says that *human blood revenges it self of the sword by rust*<sup>n</sup>, though both thoughts have a great affinity, and are equally false, (for it is equally false that blood makes the sword blush for shame, as that it makes it rusty in revenge) yet both are not equally faulty. And perhaps the latter might be defended from the censure of *Bouhours*<sup>o</sup> : especially taken with reference to what *Pliny* says a little before, and sup-

<sup>m</sup> Cited by Boileau.

<sup>n</sup> *Sanguis humanus à ferro rubigine se ulciscitur.* *Plin. Hist.*  
lib. 34. cap. 14.

<sup>o</sup> *Manière de penser.* *Dialog.* 2.

DIAL. posing that Iron commonly takes rust sooner  
IV. from human blood than from any other.



CRITOM. Something more might be added in defence of *Pliny*, not only because there is not such a *puerility* in his expression, but also from the common opinion of *Antipathies* even in inanimate things. For whether the new *Philosophers* have sufficiently proved those notions false or not, yet methinks old Authors may be allowed to speak according to old opinions. And by the by, I have heard many accuse *Bouhours* of refining too much in his Criticisms, and that a person of learning and quality in *Italy* has call'd him roundly to account for his censures in several points.

EUDOX. I have heard of that *Italian* too, but could not yet meet with his works. Nor do I believe he will convince that *Bouhours's Manière de Penser* is not a very proper book to teach many excellent notions upon the rules of framing a right judgment of the art of writing. Tho' in several things I believe him something national in his opinions, and as much too severe in some cases, as too indulgent in others. Particularly where he examines the praises given to the late King, he seldom condemns the thoughts, though several mention'd in that book; and still more in his collection of *witty Thoughts, Pensées Ingenieuses*, have the same faults which



which he finds with writings upon other sub- DIAL.  
jects. Thus he defends that bold stroke of IV.  
*Boileau*<sup>p</sup>, where speaking of the passage of  
the *Rhine*, and having told us the old story  
of fortune's doubting for a while, he adds :

*Mais Louïs d'un regard sçait bientôt la fixer :  
Le destin à ses yeux n'oseroit balancer.*

That is :

But *Louïs*' Looks soon force her to comply :  
Not even Fate dares balance in his eye.

These verses, says *Bouhours*, are strong, but  
not overbold, because they do not speak of  
destiny in general, but of the destiny of war,  
and because the presence of so courageous a  
Prince made his soldiers invincible. This  
defence is visibly weak, and still more insuf-  
ficient to excuse those wherein the King is  
made absolute master of the fate both of  
war and peace. Nor can I see how they are  
more allowable than the rant of *Almanzor*<sup>q</sup> :

*There's not a star of thine dares stay with  
thee,  
I'll whistle thy tame fortune after me ;  
And whirl Fate with me wheresoe'er I fly,  
As winds do storms before them in the sky.*

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<sup>p</sup> Epître au Roy,

<sup>q</sup> *Act 3. End.*

DIAL. For I can't see why Fortune may not be  
 IV. made tame enough to fear the whistle, as  
 ~~~~~ well as the looks of a *Hero*.

CRITOM. I perceive at least by that example of *Bouhours*, that criticks are to be read with caution, lest they should impose upon us their national, or other prejudices, for certain Rules and Standards of judgment.

EUDOX. Nay moreover, caution is not only to be had where one may have reason to suspect any prejudice of Nation, Party, *Emulosity*, and the like; but even where no such suspicion seems to have place. And I verily believe that sometimes what seems to be the effect of prejudice in men of party, or an affectation of nicety and sharp penetration, is only the effect of an accidental keenness of humour. What influences in writing, may do no less in judging. Now you may remember who concludes there is a good constitution of body and mind required to good writing<sup>r</sup>. And tho' he says it of the spirit of Poetry, and in a poetical Image, yet it is true of prose also, that like the *Halcyon* it must have fair weather to breed in. He adds, one may see "through  
 " the Style of *Ovid de Tristibus* the dejected  
 " condition of spirit with which he writ it,

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<sup>r</sup> Mr. Cowley in the preface to his works.

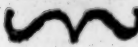
“ and that the cold of the country had struck  
 “ through all his faculties, and benumbed  
 “ the very feet of his verses.” Thus we  
 may be sometimes too cold, at other times  
 too hot, to judge aright. And why may  
 not spleen vary our judgment of books, as  
 well as of persons we converse with? Why  
 may we not be sometimes of a milder dispo-  
 sition and inclin’d to favour, at other times  
 morose and only tuned to rigour. Now I  
 hope you will be less difficult in believing I  
 am not for carrying matters too far, while I  
 give so large an allowance for caution against  
 criticism.

CRITOM. Believe me, Sir, you want no  
 Apology with me. If I have seem’d upon  
 occasions to think you inclin’d to an extre-  
 mity of rigour, you may pass it upon the ac-  
 count of my long aversion from criticks.  
 I begin now to see clearer into these matters,  
 and find a great distance between licentious-  
 ness and freedom of thought and expres-  
 sion, and how reasonable it is to prefer exact-  
 ness of solidity and truth, to all the flash  
 and jingle of the gayest words, that will  
 not bear a sober reflection. So that here-  
 after, when I seem to oppose, it will be  
 chiefly to give occasion to a farther explica-  
 tion, or at most some small remnant of an  
 old habit, which cannot be totally con-  
 quer’d but with time.



DIAL.

IV.

 **CLEAND.** This fair protestation makes me bold to mention a remark, which, for fear you should think me too much a convert of *Eudoxus*, I wou'd not propose when we were talking of *Balzac's* severity to *Pompey*. He is far more indulgent to *Augustus*, upon an occasion where I think he wou'd have found more reason for a censure. The People of *Taragone* having follow'd the example of several other cities in erecting temples to *Augustus*, sent a solemn embassy some while after to acquaint him that a Palm-tree was grown out of the altar dedicated to him. Upon this it might be expected that a heathen Emperor wou'd have dispatched the tidings of so extraordinary news throughout the Empire, and order'd it to be register'd in the Capitol, and the like. But *Augustus* only answer'd with a smile: *I see then you often burn sacrifices upon the altar you have erected to my honour.* Thus he prefer'd the satisfaction of venting a witticism, or rather a banter, to the publick opinion of so great a miracle. *Balzac* wonders this witty answer is not related by *Suetonius* nor *Macrobius*. It seems to me more strange to find it in *Quintilian*, so good a judge: tho' he only just mentions it<sup>f</sup>. It seems to me to have only a false

<sup>f</sup> AUGUSTUS nunciantibus TARRACONENSIBUS palmam in ejus arâ creatam, apparet, inquit, Quàm sæpè accendatis? Quint. lib. 6. cap. 4. post medium.

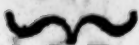
pearance of wit. For if you once suppose a miracle (as might sure be supposed in favour of a new God) the growing of the Palm-tree does not prove few sacrifices were burnt upon the altar; since it might grow by divine power even amidst the flames, and spring up in a short interval between two sacrifices. If you think I am mistaken in my opinion upon this passage, I shall easily submit.

DIAL.  
IV.

CRITOM. I do not see how to defend that answer, unless by saying *Augustus* had a mind to put off the putid flattery with a jest; and that in a jest, solidity of reason is not to be required. But in this answer also I see an inconsequence in the character of the Person, which will, I fear, ruin the defence. For since *Augustus* accepted the honour of Temples, it was too late to refuse the honour of a miracle. And moreover, altho' in some occasions Princes may, perhaps, but with great precautions, take the liberty of jesting, yet certainly it misbecomes the character of a great and wise Prince, to take that liberty in answer to the solemn addresses of subjects declaring their respects to him in the highest manner. However, supposing it to be an allowable jest in other regards, I wou'd willingly ask you, if you think it to be rejected because it includes a *Sophism*? And the same question I wou'd propose universally of all Epigrams, Jest,

Plea-

DIAL. Pleasantries, and whatever in fine comes  
IV. under the name of a witticism.



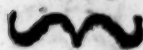
CLEAND. Alas! Sir, if that was my opinion, I shou'd not dare to own it. It wou'd bring too many young and brisk enemies upon me. But in effect it is not my opinion. Though I believe it is want of truth, which makes most of that sort of wit either appear putid upon reflection, or seldom please but at a first reading,

EUDOX. Especially if the occasion upon which they are used be serious and important. For in such compositions, nothing can please an attentive, judicious reader, that is not reasonable. And nothing is reason but what is true. Nay, altho' the design is merely a pleasantry of humour and fancy, yet if carried too far, it will certainly displease. Upon this account I am now inclin'd to admit the censure of *Bouhours* <sup>c</sup> of *Quevedo's* verses upon the adventure of *Orpheus* going to hell for his wife. I formerly admired them so much as to translate them into *Latin*. I will take the liberty to read them to you as a piece of my younger studies, tho' I am sensible now the versification is very faulty.

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<sup>c</sup> *Manière de Penfer*. Dialog. 2. post medium.





*Al infierno el Tracio Orphee  
Su muger baxò à buscar :  
Que no pudo à peor lugar  
Llevarlo tan mal desseo.*

*Cantò y al mayor tormento  
Pusò suspension & espanto  
Mas que lo dulce del canto  
La novedad del intento.*

*El triste Dios offendido  
De tan estranno rigor  
La pena que hallò mayor  
Fue bolverle a ser marido.*

*T aunque su muger le diò  
Per pena de su peccado ;  
Per premio de lo cantado  
Perder la facilitò.*

*Uxorem quærens, stygias descendit ad undas  
Orpheus, & nigri lurida regna Dei.  
Ducere nempe aliò haud poterat tam insana  
cupido,*

*Nec melius quæri tantum aliunde malum.  
Mox ubi tentavit Citharam, pœnæ immemor  
hæsit*

*Styx tota, argutis obstupefacta modis.  
Præcantu tamen illa magis (quod credere  
fas est)*

*Quærendæ uxoris consilium stupuit.  
Ast intermissas Pluto indignatus Averni  
Pœnas, hoc vati supplicium statuit.  
Mortales tanti metuant ut fata furoris,  
Tu rursus Ismarides, esto maritus, ait.*

*Dixerat :*

DIAL. *Dixerat : extemplò vati sua redditur uxor,*  
 IV. *Non dubia audaci pœna futura viro.*

~~~~~ *Carmen at argutum ne omni mercede careret,*  
*Quî mox uxorem perderet, edocuit.*

Now, as I believe it will hardly be deny'd, but these verses of *Quevedo* have a great deal of wit and fancy, so I think it may be granted they have too much of both. Thoughts of that kind should be very short. For when they go beyond the length of a sudden kind of flash, the affectation is apparent, and whatever appears affected, is visibly false, and consequently displeases the mind, whose proper object is truth in reality, or at least in appearance. But as for compositions of that nature, I shall recommend to you the dissertation before the *Delectus Epigrammatum*<sup>u</sup>, which is a collection of choice Epigrams of *Martial* and others. And here, if you please, we will break off our present subject, since we are call'd to supper. Tomorrow we may pursue the matter.

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▪ Edit. Lond. an. 1683.

T H E  
FIFTH DIALOGUE,

B E T W E E N

CRITOMACHUS, EUDOXUS,  
*and* CLEANDER.

CRITOM. **I** HAVE read over to-day that dissertation you recommended at the end of yesterday's meeting, with attention ; and I must own it is a very pretty, and, I think, a solid piece. But I fear it would make *a dreadful devastation of wit*, in the common notion of the word, if compositions of that nature were to be examined by those nice rules.

EUDOX. What you call with a smile, the devastation of wit, would however be no more than denying that to be true wit which is not true sense. The Rules, I take for true : though perhaps the application of them is sometimes mistaken by that very author. Thus, to mention no others, I wou'd  
beg



DIAL. beg his leave to excuse the Epigram of *Vul-*  
 V. *teius* upon a noble monument erected for a  
 very undeserving man. The Poet supposes,  
 while he was weeping at the tomb, one re-  
 proach'd him for weeping upon the person  
 who had been the plague of his country ;  
 upon which he replies, *You mistake me : I*  
*weep not for the loss of the man, but of the*  
*monument °.*

*Næ tu quisquis es, impius videris*  
*Pestem qui Patriæ doles sepultum.*  
*Illi contra ego. Falleris : sepulchri*  
*Facturam fleo, non fleo sepulti.*

He pretends the Poet has here mistaken the true and rational sentiments, which ought not to be of tears, but of indignation. But why might it not move tears to see villany honour'd like merit ; especially since there are tears of indignation as well as of grief. It is perhaps harder to justify the terms of *loss of the monument*, only as it was unjustly flung away upon so undeserving a subject. But to examine pieces of this kind would lead us too vast a length, and our present discourse regards chiefly the rules of writing in graver compositions. Speaking then of such, over and above what has been already said upon the requisite truth, they should be

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° *Dissertatio proximè citata.*

true not only in each *Affertion* and *Illation*, DIAL. but in the very smallest parts, and in every V. word. For without disputing whether single words or *apprehensions*, are in rigour of *Logick* true or false, yet there is in them a very near affinity with truth and falsity. Which kind of falsity is very incident to such methods of writing as we have been considering, and is chiefly observable in their metaphors.

CRITOM. Under favour, all metaphors if discuss'd to this rigour, are false: As *Flowers of Eloquence*, *Flashes of Wit*, a *stormy Mind*, and a thousand more, so much in use. Must all such be discarded?

EUDOX. By no means. But as some metaphors, by use and a natural kind of similitude, are scarce any longer to be counted metaphors, but seem turn'd into proper terms; so others, although less usual, and more apparently figurative, yet are very allowable by the connatural likeness and proportion they bear with the subject to which they are apply'd. But one who has not the discernment between the use and abuse of *metaphors*, *images*, and *comparisons*, will fall into several absurdities. I wish some late Authors could be excusable in this kind. But methinks I could easily give you a long catalogue of expressions which wou'd scarce seem better than to talk with *Feltham* of being *nipt to a benumbing with icy thumbs of winter*; or with *Cleveland* to call the Sun,

DIAL. Sun, a *coal-pit rampant*; or with *Fleckno*,

V. to say *admiration is the drunkenness of the understanding*; or call silence *still-born* and the *floodgate of the deeper heart, the frost of the mouth, and thaw of the mind*.

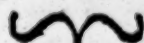
CLEAND. Upon this point of truth, exactness, likeness, and proportion of Metaphors, I wonder'd to find *Emanuel Tesauro* so very rigorous in some places of his *Canocchiale*. Particularly <sup>a</sup> where speaking of what the *Italians* call *Imprese*, and we generally confound under the common name of *Emblems*; he observes that altho' every metaphor is a fiction, yet it must be likely and grounded in nature. For, says he, when you take a metaphor from a *Chimerical* object, you build an appearance of truth upon an apparent falsity. And therefore he adds, that in true eloquence it is more allowable to call a flatterer the *Rock* than the *Scylla* of Princes; because the former is a true and natural object, the other is imaginary and fabulous: And consequently, tho' ingenious in appearance, yet is not solid. He adds moreover, it is truer wit to find out the similitude and relation between real objects, than in forged inventions, which have no limits, and may be vary'd and carry'd on at pleasure, while truth and reality have their determinate bounds. Upon

<sup>a</sup> *Canoc. Cap. 15. Tesi. 6.*



these considerations, he excludes poetical fictions from the body of an Emblem.

DIAL.  
V.



EUDOX. That Author is very far from sticking close to the Rules he prescribes, as may be seen in several of his works. One or two places I have here noted, which I believe neither of you will much excuse. They come pretty near to the purpose in hand, and are singular enough to be mention'd at least by the by. They occur'd to me as I was reflecting upon a common Saying, that what is reason in one country and language, will be every where reasonable. Which saying is, I think, chiefly to be understood of the substance of the reason, while the way of expression may seem con-natural to the *Italians*, for example, and not at all to the *English* Tongue. Thus speaking of a nice piece of Eloquence which will bear the eye and censure of the most accurate Reader, we should not be allow'd to say ; *not a word of it enters the eye, without passing under the triumphal arch of the admiring eyebrow.* Yet when *Tesaura* in an academical discourse call'd *il Judicio*<sup>a</sup> said, *Ni una parola entra per l'occhio, che non passi sotto l'arco triumphale del ciglio ammiratore* : I question not but he was much applauded for so noble an expression.

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<sup>a</sup> *Sopra il Talento di due famosi Predicatori l'Albrici et l'Orimbelli.*

DIAL. The same I believe of what he says in another academical discourse, which he calls

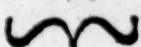
V. *Il Parallelo della vita et del honore; that Honour is an immortality which cuts the wings of time to write our praises, and steals the sickle of death to mow the fields of glory. Tarpale penna al Tempo per iscrivere le nostre lodi, & fura la falce à morte per mieter campi di gloria.*

CRITOM. Perhaps such thoughts seem less unnatural to the *Italians*, not only by the character of their language, but because there may possibly be in their heads as well as in their towns, some ruins of their former martial glory, and triumphant arches. Nor yet will I own our language and genius have less of what is truly noble, though they require a more natural and moderate tone.

EUDOX. Besides falling into expressions of that kind, or such others as we have talked of in matter of metaphors, transferr'd terms, images, and representations, an exact author will avoid several that are less observable. Such as are some of those you will find in this little *French* dissertation upon exactness of thought and expression. For example: this Author finds fault with *Voiture*, for saying, *I do not yet find the effect of your prediction.* Because, says he, predictions do not cause the things fore-

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<sup>c</sup> De la Jusseffe.

told; and therefore he should not have DIAL.  
said the effect, but the truth of your pre- V.  
diction. 

CRITOM. I perceive indeed that expression is not exact. Yet as the fault is only observable to very accurate Readers, I should fear too great a scrupulosity, if I gave way to such reflections. At this rate, many elegant expressions of the best Authors, must be condemn'd. Thus *Cicero* will be carp't at for saying *quædam suavitas coloris*; nor shall we be allow'd with him to say a picture has a great *delicacy and sweetness of colours*, because sweetness belongs to the taste, and colour to the Eye. In this kind I was strangely surpriz'd at those antient Criticks<sup>d</sup>, who from observations of that nature, blame a sentence of *Cicero* which seems to have a particular grace. The advantageous mien of *Marcus Cælius*, made him suffer some undeserved aspersions, because he cou'd not hinder people from thinking him a handsome man. Whereupon *Cicero* says in his defence, *Id nunquam feret tam acerbè MARCUS CÆLIUS, ut eum pæniteat non esse deformem natum.* This they pretend is not exact, because the word *pænitet* agrees not to things which include no free and deliberate fault. In which, says *Gellius*, these men look upon themselves to be very

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<sup>d</sup> Gallus Asinius, and Largus Licinius. *Apud A. Gel. Noct. Lib. 17. Cap. 1.*



DIAL. subtle<sup>c</sup>. But certainly by a very mistaken

V. subtilty. It is even because repentance is relative to a crime; he might very properly say that *Cælius* did not repent that he was not born an ugly fellow, since there is no need of a real repentance for a false crime. As if he wou'd say, he would never repent while his only crime was, not to be a wry-mouth'd and squinting dwarf.

CLEAND. I am persuaded your defence of *Cicero* is very just. However, that Criticism may give great light into the accuracy which is requisite in the choice of words. And methinks by such as the late examples, I see farther into the nature of an exact Style, than I shou'd by a long series of rules.

EUDOX. It is farther to be observed, that excellent words, if not exactly sorted together, make a vicious expression. Just as excellent sentences, if incoherent, make a very bad discourse. In effect, what incoherent sentences are to a discourse, words of disagreeing ideas are to each expression. And therefore when they have very different or opposite notions, they are not to be join'd in the same period, unless one either corrects the vehemence, or inforces the weakness of the other, or by the very joining them together makes up a third di-

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\* *In quo sibi visi sunt verborum pensitatores subtilissimi.* Ibid.  
 stinct

stinct and proportionable idea, rather than DIAL. keep their primitive opposition. Examples V. have been already given in this kind. So I shall rather mention two or three which may hinder the remark from being carry'd too far. *Bellegarde* <sup>f</sup> finds fault with one for talking of *eyes arm'd with all their charms*, because *arms*, and *charms*, raise different Ideas. This methinks is being over-apprehensive of raising wars in the mind. And certainly that expression has sufficient defence from the arrows of *Cupid*. The same *Bellegarde* censures *St. Evremont* for saying *a source of apprehensions and of tears*. A source of tears is regular, says this Critick; but a source of apprehensions is no less unknown than the source of the *Nile*. Now I can see no reason for this remark, but to make way for that profound piece of Erudition concerning the unknown source of that famous River. As for the fault he finds in *burning the world by a deluge of fire*, I will not absolutely deny but that the terms of *burning* and *deluge* are of themselves jarring notions. Yet we know what is meant by raining down fire; nor do I see what great impropriety of expression there wou'd be, to say *the crimes of the world deserve it shou'd be destroyed by a second deluge, not of water, but of fire*. The rea-

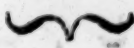
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<sup>f</sup> Reflex. sur l' Elegance. §. termes mal-affortis.

DIAL. son of allowing these or the like expressions, is this. Truth being a strict conformity with the object, whatever is not true, cannot be strictly exact. Consequently exactness, in the proper use of the word, admits of no latitude, as truth does not. But as we often are ignorant of the real truth, and forced to be content with probabilities, so exactness is often taken for a plausible agreement of Style with the subject in hand, and with received notions. And as truth excludes not the use of metaphors, and other figures of discourse; so it is not against exactness to take sometimes a larger compass than will fall within the strict terms of rule. It is a known saying, *Impetratum est a ratione ut peccare suavitatis causâ liceret*. Nor is this to be understood only in leaving out such letters as wou'd cut upon one another in the pronunciation, or changing some letters for a smoother sound, or the other methods of avoiding what is call'd *Cacophonia*; but also in metaphors, and other expressions, wherein reason has been prevail'd with, to receive notions which are not exactly true, in favour of a sweet and pleasing error.

CRITOM. From the reasons and examples you give, I perceive still more, you are far from so exorbitant a rigour as I began to apprehend upon the first news of your disliking *Callicrates's* Style. We are now  
in



in a fair way of agreement upon the art of DIAL.  
writing, and little will remain to adjust the V.  
difference. 

CLEAND. I knew the character of your judgment so well, that I foresaw you wou'd not long dissent. I was sure at least, when I engaged you in the dispute, it wou'd not end in a quarrel. Though a lesser matter ended formerly in a great war. A fault of Orthography in the inscription of a statue, caused first a criticism ; this came to a hot dispute, thence followed injuries, and from injuries a bloody war between the *Magnesiens* and the neighbouring towns. And as *Emmanuel Tesauro* expresses it in his *Cannocchiale*\*, *They fought Barbarously for a Barbarism.*

EUDOX. By the by, that sort of clinching is frequent with the *Italians*, and so common with that Author, that in one or two chapters only of the same book, he has ; *Traditioni sono sovente tradimenti, ogni tratto è un pertratto, preso & preteso, giovane dissoluto & padrone assoluto, sulle membrane delle membra, combattuto & battuto, &c.* These, especially when frequent, are unpardonable. When rare, and as it were casually incident, they may pass. For unless I am mistaken, even *Cæsar* says, *quos*

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\* Cap. 6. delle figure Ingegnose.

DIAL. *habuit insectatores, habuit sectatores: Cæsar,*

V. who is of all Authors the least pedantick and affected. As commonly great persons are most free from those faults. I wish our writers were as free from other faults we have been discoursing upon, as from clinches and puns. Tho' some are not totally free from these neither. But I fear those other faults are partly grown too strong, partly will not be own'd, nor consequently admit of an easy remedy.

CRITOM. While the *Lacedemonians* were victorious, they always affected that short concise way of expression which from them is call'd *Laconism*. But after their defeat by *Epaminondas*, they found in their hearts to make a long invective against him. Whereupon he only answer'd, *I am glad I have at length taught them to make their periods longer*. I hope you do not think our new *Laconick* writers are not to be brought to a reasonable length of Style by any more easy means than a sound beating.

CLEAND. I conceive the strokes of some able pen might effect a considerable amendment, and correct not only the affectation of brevity, but also the making a kind of *antithesis* in almost every period, and thrusting bold metaphors, and new-coin'd words into every line, with more regard  
to

to the sound than sense. I cou'd name some who might go a great way in correcting those corrupt and vicious ways of writing, and by the examples and rules they wou'd give, might make a very effectual advance towards the settling and *ascertaining* our language, and a correct delicacy of Style.

DIAL.  
V.

EUDOX. I am convinced one might find some excellent hands for so useful a design. But though I am persuaded their remarks wou'd be excellent, and their correctness of writing a great pattern, and no less instructive than the best of rules; yet I fear those who cry they write to the humour of the age, will hardly be reclaim'd. 'Tis said that *Augustus* with a word of command cou'd make frogs leave off croaking. As this is sufficiently fabulous, so, I am sure enough, that he could not, though *Horace* help'd him with the voice of his satyrs, silence the impertinent writers of his time. Corrupt writers are like *Fanatics* in religion, of all sects the hardest to be convinc'd, and the most strangely addicted to their errors.

CLEAND. And as Fanatics gain proselytes, so those writers gain admirers by the same way. That is, by applying more to fancy than to judgment, and to the senses more than to reason. Accordingly they use

I

such



DIAL. such phrases as raise the imagination, and  
 V. strike upon the ear with the most airy sound;  
 ~~~~~ where the pleasure being sensual, can be  
 had with the least immateriality of thought;  
 while thinking accurately, and chusing the  
 most solid rather than the most sounding  
 expressions, requires a more judicious care  
 than their fiery temper will admit. Hence  
 they often make me reflect, that one might  
 say of them as Mr. *Dryden* does of *Shad-*  
*well*;

“ *He faggotted his notions as they fell,*  
 “ *And if they rhym’d and rattl’d, all*  
 “ *was well.*

At other times they make me think of an  
 Author who speaking of one being wrapt  
 in an extasy, to use a greater sound, call’d  
 it an *Antiperistasis*. Being told this sig-  
 nified a very different thing, the harmo-  
 nious Author answered, at least it is a pretty  
 sounding word.

EUDOX. And by their perpetual affecta-  
 tion of *Opposites* (which is the general source  
 of false thoughts and vicious expressions)  
 they put me in mind of a comparison  
 used by *Pascal*<sup>h</sup>. He says, those Authors  
 who to make an *antithesis* force their words,  
 are like those who make false windows for

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<sup>h</sup> *Pensées de Mr. Pascal, propè finem.*

symmetry. Their rule is not to speak accurately, but to make set figures. May I not add, that as false windows are sometimes a kind of an ornament, but give no light, so those forc'd figures add sometimes to the seeming grace, but never to the true light of a discourse. And as false windows, if multiply'd, are only a great number of arguments that the architect or situation was very bad, so those frequent figures only make the Author's indisposition be more observable.

DIAL.

V.

CLEAND. Above all, in moral and grave subjects, that affectation of Style shou'd ever be avoided. For either people will think no real good is design'd, and consequently none will be wrought, while they find you playing with words; or you will make them begin to fear a design of smoothly imposing upon them, and they will stand as much upon their guard for fear of being overreach'd by your figures and sophistry, as they wou'd for fear of being overseen in their cups, and overborn with sophisticated Wines. Which is a comparifon I remember in *Aristotle*<sup>i</sup>, in his books of Rhetorick.

EUDOX. When once an ambition of seeming singularly witty has gain'd the head,

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<sup>i</sup> *Caventur improbanturque ut vina miscellanea & factitia.*  
Rhet. lib. 3. cap. 2,

DIAL. it is little reflected how ill that levity of  
 V. Style agrees with a grave subject. And  
 whatever the subject is, that ambition  
 has this general inconvenience, that, as  
*Tacitus* says of princes<sup>k</sup>, *If they empty  
 their treasury by ambition, they will supply  
 it by crimes*; so those Authors who are  
 over-ambitious of appearing witty, when  
 they find their stock grows low, are cast  
 upon a thousand unwarrantable licences.  
 And if they seem to have gain'd any ap-  
 plause by this criminal eloquence, (if you  
 will let me use so fierce an expression)  
 their rashness increases beyond all measure.

CRITOM. They shou'd reflect it is not  
 every one has the fortune of *Alexander*,  
 to make his rashness prove glorious<sup>l</sup>. For  
 my part, I am now sufficiently persuaded  
 that great regard must be had to rules,  
 and am now reclaimed from the prejudice  
 which before made me apt to mis-apply a  
 saying of our noble *Briton*, *Galgacus*, in  
 the life of *Agrippa* by *Tacitus*. Among  
 other reasons to incense the *Britons* against  
 the tyranny of the *Romans*, he says<sup>m</sup>,  
*When of a flourishing populous country they*

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<sup>k</sup> *Ærarium si ambitione exhauserimus, per scelera supplendum erit. Tacitus, Annal. lib. 2.*

<sup>l</sup> *Cum præstò esset ubique fortuna, temeritas in gloriam cessit. Curtius, lib. 3.*

<sup>m</sup> *Ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant. Tacitus, in vitâ Agrippæ.*



*have made a desert, they call it peace.* DIAL.

Thus, (shou'd I formerly have said) when V.

the tyranny of criticks has brought eloquence to bare, and mean expressions, they will call it accuracy. But now I perceive there is more to be fear'd from a lawless liberty, than from the severity of rules. Especially (since there is a rational judicious way of expression, which maintains a great part of its beauty even after a long course of years has brought many changes into the language and humour of people) I cannot but conclude, that it is preferable to the airy, the florid, the bold expressions, which hardly pass beyond a short wonder.

EUDOX. I shall not hereupon pretend to determine with all the accuracy of Mr. *la Chambre*<sup>n</sup>, in what true beauty consists in general, nor in particular that lasting beauty of a Style. But to give a hint at the main point; it is obvious to remark, that what is beautiful is termed agreeable, and that *agreeable* is a relative term. Farther, that when we say one is a beautiful or agreeable person, we do not only mean he has a just proportion or agreement in the parts and features, but that from this agreement there arises naturally in the beholders a liking and approbation, tho' some may

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<sup>n</sup> Caracteres des Passions.

possibly

DIAL. possibly be found, either so unreflecting,  
 V. or so viciated in eye or judgment, as not  
 to perceive the beauty. Thus in writing,  
 there is such a proportion of words and  
 thoughts to the subject, the author, and  
 circumstances of both, as is naturally agree-  
 able to every sound judgment, however  
 some readers may be insensible to its charms.  
 And in both cases the agreeableness to  
 others, flows from the agreement of the  
 parts in the thing itself, and is consequently  
 more lasting than all beauty that depends  
 on borrowed ornaments.

CLEAND. I remember a comparison of  
*Causin*, which methinks gives a pretty con-  
 ception of the difference between the arti-  
 ficial ways of writing, and that you call  
 natural. Take, says he °, some curious  
 landskip of woods, groves, hills, fountains,  
 and whatever you can imagine capable to  
 compleat a pleasing object. It will please  
 you at first more than nature itself. The  
 painted birds upon every bough, shall strike  
 your eye with a more agreeable view, than  
 to see the same in reality. But the plea-  
 sure is not so lasting. Nature soon resumes  
 the just preference, and is more permanent  
 in the pleasure it affords. It is so in your  
 airy metaphorical Styles; they please at  
 first, but the pleasure is not lasting. And

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° Eloq. lib. 2. cap. 9.

here, moreover, I cannot but reflect that, DIAL.  
 however, many will still be judging of V.  
 Styles as they do of Pictures, by the gay-  
 ness of the colours. ~

CRITOM. It is certainly as ridiculous to give all subjects the same air of expression, as to give all paintings the same lustre of colours. Yet where the nature of the subject requires a less florid turn, it must still keep a beauty and nobleness of air that suffers it not to fall into deformity or meanness. Thus, although natural apprehension may be allowed to make the blood of a *Heroine* retire at the near view of a cruel death, from the cheeks to the heart, yet *Tasso* methinks gives a great instance both of the beauty and generosity of *Sophronia*, of whom, when now tyed to the stake, she saw the fire just lighting about her, he says <sup>p</sup>, That upon so dreadful a sight, a natural horror chang'd indeed her looks, yet to a colour that was rather white than pale.

*E smarrisce il bel volto in un colore,  
 Che non e pallidezza, ma candore.*

Perhaps you will think this too nice and too gay a stroke of the poet in so moving a subject. Nor shall I examine it in that

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<sup>p</sup> *Gierusalemme*. Canto 2. Stanza 26.



DIAL. regard. But something of the difference  
 V. between white and pale in her looks, is  
 ~~~~~ what resembles the right change of ex-  
 pression upon particular occasions.

EUDOX. While we are thus running into the more general reflections which we have sufficiently considered before, I had like to forget a particular instance or two of using clashing terms, which may help to a great care of avoiding this fault, which is apt to be very much overlooked by careless writers; tho' it is so far subject to censure, that the respect we have to great authors will hardly make it excusable. No one, for example, cou'd ever perhaps venture at bold faults more unblameably than *Milton*; yet I wou'd not be positive (tho' I mention this with great submission) that every good judge in these matters will allow of his *visible darknes*<sup>a</sup>, in the description of the flames of Hell. *Palpable darknes* is a consecrated expression from Holy Scripture, and naturally grounded in the thickness of vapours. But I fear *visible darknes* will be no more excused than to have said, *how deep a silence strikes my ear*? When terms of this kind are kept at something greater distance, they are not at first so observable, and consequently not so apt to revolt the reader's mind, if I may use that expression,

<sup>a</sup> Verse 63.

which

which is so common with the *French*. Yet DIAL. when they are observed upon a second V. thought, they must needs be displeasing in proportion to their opposition and incoherence. But let me add, that the mere Sound must not make one too quick in this matter: especially in great Authors. Thus I once thought I could give an instance of this kind from *Milton*, and from a place I mention'd before as agreeable and pleasing, tho' not rigorously true, in these verses \*.

*Now gentle gales  
Fanning their odoriferous wings dispense  
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they  
stole  
Those balmie spoils.*

Here I fancied nothing but the poetical beauty of the expression, and distance of the words *native* and *stolen*, would easily bear them out, because what is *native* is opposite to *stolen*. Upon a review I found my mistake; and that *native* here is not opposite to *stolen*, but to *artificial*; viz. to essences and artificial mixtures: *native* in regard of the flowers and plants, *stolen* in regard of the *Zephyrs*.

CLEAND. However difficult it may be to excuse such clashing terms, I am almost as

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\* Lib. 4. v. 157.

DIAL. much displeased with the frequent repeating  
 V. of the same terms ; not only meaning a  
 ~~~~~ constant particularity of cadence, or a frequent, reiterated kind of a singular jog, but also of Phrases which often return by the careless, the forgetful, or the affected writer. Especially such expressions, as, like rhimes and comparisons in poetry, are worn out by frequent use, and are become positively flat by repetitions. Whereupon I remember a friend of mine made a copy of verses, which tho' defective in the poetical part, yet seem to be a just explication of the fault he censures, and whereof I retain these following, in which he alludes to some passages in particular authors.

*Were I the Sun, I'd at a Poet's sight  
 Contract my rays, and hide my rising light.  
 Ne'er would I suffer (no, the fate's too hard)  
 That ev'ry puzzl'd and exhausted Bard  
 Should force the lustre of the rising Sun  
 To finish thoughts which Phoebus ne'er will  
 own.*

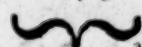
*Sure Momus soon will tell him with reproach  
 His Chariot's now become a hackney Coach.  
 His foaming Horses spend themselves in rage,  
 Whip'd by each hag-rid Fancy of the age.  
 Some force him this, and some the other way,  
 Some make a longer, some a shorter day.  
 One scarce begins to whip 'em to the West,  
 But straight he whips 'em backwards to the  
 East.*

The



DIAL.

V.



The day's confounded in a puzzled light,  
*And from the morning he begins the night;*  
*Or tires him out by forcing him to rest,*  
*Tumbling him headlong into Thetis' breast.*  
*Another makes him fly some bloody fight,*  
*And wink upon us with the eye of light.*  
*Another having somewhat else to shroud,*  
*Brings in the morning pictur'd in a cloud.*  
*One makes him startle and grow pale with*  
 fears,  
*Or tells you that some whining lover's tears*  
 His blushing cheeks so gracefully adorn,  
 Methought the Sun came usher'd by the morn.  
*Then learn, when now the Sun is down, his*  
 light  
 Is clipt into a thousand stars by night.  
*Ev'n Boileau, whom one might justly think*  
*Horace had better taught, can make him blink,*  
*And tire both Sun and us with thread-bare*  
 stories,  
*Of carrying round the world Great Louiis'*  
 glories.

CRITOM. Under favour I shall presume to tell you, that if you had gone any farther, I shou'd have been tempted to think that your Poet, by particularizing too far the different ways in which others have abused the Sun, wou'd have run him down again by a tiresome course of all the toils he and his horses were ever employ'd in. However (if you will give me leave to speak once more in that *Phæbean* style) before he goes to water

DIAL. his horses this evening, I cannot but take  
 V. notice that in all the accuracy you have been  
 ~~~~~ discoursing upon, nothing has been properly  
 said of grammatical faults.

EUDOX. It is so visible that where grammatical faults in the construction, are either frequent or gross, there can be no manner of perfection in writing, that methinks it were needless to insist upon them. Especially since to run thro' niceties of that nature is much too long and tedious a work for conversation. This at least may be here observed, that where Grammarians themselves are not agreed, it wou'd be impertinent to cavil at a Style otherwise commendable, or not to pass over such, as one may reasonably think cou'd not so well be illiterate Mistakes, as sudden *Lapses* of the pen or printer; or to be nibbling at dubious points of orthography, as if they were hired to make the *Errata* of authors.

CLEAND. Methinks to be industriously idle in gathering up all the little faults of that nature, is like *Heliogabalus's* sending to gather all the Cobwebs of *Rome*, not with any concern for neatness, but for mere curiosity to know the quantity of them, which he found amounted to ten thousand pound weight. If we were thus to run thro' all the requisites to Accuracy of writing,  
 we

we shou'd add what Mr. *Osburn*<sup>b</sup> with DIAL. mighty prudence advises his son, that *in the* V. *art of writing, the ink ought to be fluent, and the pen good, lest the illnefs of that, or the frequent taking up hairs with a pen, shou'd put you out of the road of your former sense, and line of invention.* And by the same consequence we shou'd examine what climate or weather shou'd be chosen to be exact; we shou'd, in fine, be particular too upon the constitution of body requisite to the same effect. For what was cited above from Mr. *Cowley* in the spirit of a poetical image, is true in prose, that, like the *Halcyon*, wit commonly must have fair weather to breed in<sup>c</sup>. And it is true what *Calli-crates* says, that some men can hardly talk sense unless the sun shines out; and that if a man would make nice remarks, he might almost tell in what *Latitude* a book was writ.

EUDOX. I suppose you will accordingly make the Weather-glass or Almanack as necessary to be consulted for exact writing, as *Aristotle* and *Quintilian*. But to return to the point concerning some smaller faults in writing, it is observable that some such are incident to good authors, but not therefore excusable in themselves. Those are

<sup>b</sup> Advice, part. 2. §. 35.

<sup>c</sup> Mr. *Cowley*'s Preface to his Works.



DIAL. not to pass for right, nor to be made precedents, though they are not on the other side to be made capital blemishes in the reputation of the author. The best of men have small frailties, and the best of authors have intervals of a forgetful or hasty negligence. Thus *Rapin*<sup>d</sup> having said, *nothing is more smooth than the Style of Zenophon*, in the very next words he adds, *the writings of Livy are still more smooth*. But this, in such a one as *Rapin*, is mere inadvertency, and not to be mention'd by way of censure, but of caution. The same I shou'd think of what he said before<sup>e</sup>, that we shou'd write with *that exactness of judgment, from which nothing escapes which is not judicious*. There is too much of *Synonymy* in the terms of judgment and judicious, for an exact expression; but he has too little of such faults to be criticized for them with any thing of severity.

CRITOM. Notwithstanding the change I find in myself as to requiring Accuracy, I cannot but be very much pleased with that fair allowance for lenity due to good writers. In return, I will own that where faults even of that smaller nature are frequent, they are inexcusable. *Gondamor*, you know, used to talk Solecisms out of policy with King *James*. The subtle *Spaniard* found the

<sup>d</sup> Instruc. pour l'Histoire. §. 13.

<sup>e</sup> Ibid. §. 3.

King took a pleasure in laughing at his expressions, and he wisely preferred the interest of his favour, to the repute of his own *Latin*. But I do not see how the like liberty may be taken by authors, tho' I fear some wou'd make use of the saying of *Gondamor* for a cloak to their ignorance or carelessness, when he reply'd to the King:  
 " I speak like a King with an uncontrolled  
 " liberty of speech, and your Majesty like  
 " a Grammarian, as if you fear'd the Rod  
 " if you, miss'd in a Rule."

DIAL.  
V.

EUDOX. I have already sufficiently told you my mind upon the difference between a reasonable freedom, and an uncontrollable liberty in these matters. As to the faults which we have considered, there occurs to me a remark which at first will seem a paradox. It is, that some faults are not faults till they are corrected. Expressions otherwise faulty and irregular at the bottom, yet are pardonable at least, when it is visible you did not design them for exact and rigorously true. A clear Irony, or poetical Notion, or a pleasant Metaphor, make them blameless or agreeable. But when you offer to correct them, they become inexcusable if what follows by way of correction is not perfectly true and exact. I have here at hand an example from *Balzac*<sup>f</sup>. Writing to a

<sup>f</sup> Entretien. 2.

DIAL. friend, and giving an account of bleeding

V. one night, he rubs up the poetical notion  
 of *purpurea anima*, and the soul going out  
 with the blood. Then he endeavours to be  
 pleasant upon the matter of that *bloody spec-*  
*tacle, at which, says he, there were no*  
*spectators*, and calls his bed *the amphi-*  
*theatre of that sanguinary affair*. I know  
 not how far you may approve of this *Bal-*  
*zacian* kind of eloquence. However all  
 this I wou'd pass. Nor wou'd I censure  
 what he adds, *Now I can't say I love you*  
*with all my soul, since I have lost half of it*.  
 The allusion to the poets taking the blood  
 for the soul, is clear. But when he pre-  
 tends to correct the matter by saying, *to*  
*speak regularly, I can only tell you that I*  
*love you with my whole strength*; I can-  
 not forbear thinking the correction makes  
 it inexcusable. For sure he had lost half  
 his strength, no less than half his soul. And  
 here, among other senses, that of *Horace*  
 will have place :

*In vitium cedit culpæ fuga, si caret arte.*

And now, Gentlemen, tho' by the fall of  
 the day I perceive we have made a long  
 session, yet I will make bold to sum up the  
 chief heads of what has been said, and what  
 I take to be requisite to an accurate Style.  
 Clearness and Perspicuity must be put with  
*Aristotle,*



*Aristotle*<sup>s</sup>, in the first place: for words were instituted only to explain our thoughts. Hence the most genuine and proper words are commonly the best. Metaphors must be used with moderation, so as neither to turn ænigmatical nor poetical, flat nor childish, nor too great or too little for the purpose. Phrases, affected figures, antithetical jars, puns and clinches, words borrow'd with too great freedom from other languages, or from subjects commonly unknown, and joining old and new words together, are no less to be avoided.

DIAL.  
V.

CLEAND. Pardon my interrupting you to mention a fierce comparison of *Balzac*, which just now occurs upon that point. He compares<sup>h</sup> the joining superannuated words with others of modern use, to the tyrannical cruelty of him, who the Poet tells us tied the living to dead bodies.

*Mortua quin etiam jungebat corpora vivis.*

EUDOX. To proceed: the cadence must neither grate the ear by harshness, nor tire it with an homogeneal smoothness. As to the length of periods, 'tis in their common measure as in prospects; the most extended

<sup>s</sup> *Definita sit orationis virtus ut perspicua sit, & ut neque humilis, neque supra dignitatem elata, sed decora.* Rhet. l. 3. cap. 2.

<sup>h</sup> Entret. 38.

DIAL. are not the most agreeable. These do rather fatigue than please the eye, and those  
V. rather tire than divert the mind and ear.  
W On the other side, those authors displease no less who seem afraid of making a period reach beyond a line. How that way of writing can be call'd eloquence, I know not; as I am sure it has more of start and fally, than of discourse: especially where the author speaks alone. For in dialogues it may be often connatural not to carry on the thoughts too long, conversation running more upon the sudden flash, than the sedate management of studied and finish'd Ideas. In a word: The Style of those books which are often entitled *Characters*, I never admired in those very books, and much less when used in other matters. Again; as not only running or jumping, but creeping along, tires one more than walking a moderate pace; so the mind is soon weary of following those impetuous Styles which hurry it along, and those which in the contrary extreme seem to creep; but willingly continues with one of a moderate equal tenour. Finally, there must be an inviolable conformity to the rules of construction, and above all, to strict reason and truth; all which, I by no means pretend to deliver upon any authority of mine, for I have no pretence to any, but upon what I think is the opinion of those great men whose authority has been ever acknowledged

I

ledg'd

ledg'd as unquestionable by the consent of DIAL. the best ages of writing, and not to be re- V. versed by those bold authors, who wou'd have no rule besides their own fancy and humour.

CRITOM. Upon the authority and reasons which have been alledged, and within the bounds which have been set to excesses of Criticism, I fully assent to your opinion ; and am persuaded, the reflections which have been made upon this subject, by sinking deeper into my mind, will make me hereafter frame a better judgment of the books I read.

EUDOX. I began to fear you would say with the author of *The Method to Science*,<sup>i</sup> in his long-winded preface, that *Rules sinking deep into the Soul, become a limb of the judgment.*

CRITOM. *A limb of judgment* is a very odd notion.

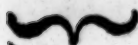
EUDOX. So are several others of that Author, whose opinions and reasons are more unaccountable than his expressions, as I shall take occasion to evince whenever you please we shou'd discourse out our differences in philosophy. At present, I fear,

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<sup>i</sup> Mr. J. S.



DIAL. we shall make the company stay for us at  
V. *Cleander's Nephew's.*



CLEAND. It is not so far, but we may  
still arrive in time.

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A  
**LETTER**  
 OF

**CRITOMACHUS *to* EUDOXUS.**

WHEREIN

Most of the precedent Reflections  
 are confirmed by the Authority of  
 QUINTILIAN, in an Abstract of  
 several places of that judicious  
 Author.

SIR,

**M**ETHINKS I see you startle at  
 the sight of these papers, from  
 one whom you know to have  
 been, no less averse from long Letters, than  
 from long Styles. Nor could any thing, less  
 than the desire of letting you see, how  
 much I enter into your Ideas upon the  
 subject of our late Conferences, have drawn  
 me so far.

MORE

MORE favourable occasions than I cou'd have expected, having allow'd me here some hours to myself, I fell to reading *Quintilian*. He is one of your favourite Authors, and since it was upon your advice I began to read him, I hope you will more easily excuse the trouble I presume to give you, in sending my remarks upon him.

I have scarce insisted upon any, but such as confirm the Reflections of our discourses upon *Accuracy of Style*. Of some places I have made an *Abstract*, with a little mixture of *Paraphrase*. Others I have endeavour'd meerly to translate. You are too well acquainted with the nicety of *Quintilian's* Comparisons, Metaphors, and whole Turn of his Expression, not to see how hard it is to give them their full strength and beauty in another Language. Nor did I ever imagine I cou'd equal so great an *Original*. What I have done, was only to imprint more deeply in my mind the principles he delivers. And I send you my *Essay* to know, whether I have tolerably hit upon the notions you chiefly meant, in advising me to read his *Institutions*. The parts of the *Latin* text of my Author, which I have added from time to time, were not taken as the best (for that wou'd have been of too difficult a choice) but as they fell to my pen; and as they seem'd proper



proper to lead you to the places wherein you might be curious to see, how far I have been true to my Author and Design.

I was now at the tenth Chapter of the first Book, before I thought of penning down my remarks: where observing what he says of the danger of using new words, (though we are agreed upon the point) yet it was, I think, something of my former prejudice to *Criticism*, which made me immediately write down what he adds: <sup>a</sup> That sometimes however, we must boldly venture, since, as *Cicero* says, what seems harsh at first, will grow smooth by use. But then he tempers the freedom, by adding, that meer coining of words at pleasure, will not be supported: That several words, though otherwise extremely fitted to their subjects, wou'd not be allow'd but upon the judgment of antiquity <sup>b</sup>: That an exact difference must be observed between words which the freedom of conversation admits, and the accuracy of writing absolutely rejects <sup>c</sup>: That upon the whole, words are to be examin'd by Reason, Antiquity, Authority and Custom; the reason of them is commonly their *Analogy* or Proportion, and sometimes from their *Etymology* or Deri-

<sup>a</sup> Audendum tamen: namque, ut ait Cicero, etiam quæ primò dura visa sunt, usu molliuntur.

<sup>b</sup> Jam hæc balare quidem aut hinnire fortiter diceremus, nisi judicio vetustatis niterentur.

<sup>c</sup> Est etiam sua loquentibus observatio, sua scribentibus.

vation. Antiquity gives them a kind of Majesty and Religious Veneration<sup>d</sup>. Their Authority is to be taken from *Orators* or *Historians*: for *Poets* are often excused by the necessity of *Metre*. And when the quantity admits either, the choice of a less usual word is allowed to their humour; or we then take the judgment of a great Author for a Reason, and even a mistake is thought graceful, when we follow some eminent Guide<sup>e</sup>. But custom is, in fine, the most certain rule of words, whereof such only are to be used, as, like money, bear the publick stamp<sup>f</sup>; and still in all these, a sharp discerning judgment is absolutely requisite.

IF it were in the present view of my remarks, I wou'd willingly observe to you that what our Author has at the end of this chapter, shews that the antient *Etymologists*, notwithstanding all their learning, could often fall, no less than the modern Gentlemen of that Trade, into very ridiculous derivations. Such are those he mentions of *Stella quasi luminis stilla; Cælibes quasi cælites, quia onere gravissimo vacent; Pituita quia per eam petitur vita.*

<sup>d</sup> *Vetera majestas quadam, &c, ut sic dixerim, Religio quadam commendat.*

<sup>e</sup> *Et vel error honestus est, magnos duces sequentibus.*

<sup>f</sup> *Utendumque planè sermone ut nummo, cui publica forma est. Omnia tamen hæc exigunt acre judicium.*

But

But who, says he, may not hope to be pardoned any strangeness in this kind, since even the learned *Varro* tells you *ager* is call'd so, *quia in eo agitur aliquis*? Which is no better than if I should say, a Field is call'd so, because it is fill'd. And when the same *Varro* will have *Merula* be *quasi mera volans, quia sola volat*, I think there is no need of any farther instance, to shew how far the humour may be apt to lead. I dare answer for it, you here call to mind the genealogical line of *Diaper* to King *Pipin*. Which is a stroke of Etymological Heraldry I cou'd not imagine wou'd be ever equall'd, 'till I found<sup>s</sup> how Mr. *Menage* derives *Jargon* from *Barbarus*, in a direct line, thus: *Barbarus, barbaricus, baricus, varicus, iiaricus, guaricus, guarigus, gargus, gargo, gargonis, jargon*; and *Laquais* from *verna; vernula, vernulacus, vernulacaius, lacaius, laquay, laquais*. How *Alfana* is descended from *Equus*, I know not; but the Chevalier *de Cailly* in his *Petites Poësies* speaks of it in a way that has pleased *Bouhours*<sup>h</sup>.

*Alfana vient d'Equus sans doute :  
Mais il faut avouer aussi,  
Qu'en venant delà jusques-icy,  
Il a bien changé sur la route.*

<sup>s</sup> Vide Bouhours Remarques Nouvelles sur la Langue Francoise.

<sup>§</sup> Urbanité.

<sup>h</sup> Maniere de Penſer. Dial. 2.



Which verses, I did but just think of, as I lately enter'd into one of the walks here, which you say are made for the Muses, when immediately I english'd them thus :

*Yes : to be sure, 'tis as you say :*

*Alfana must from Equus come.*

*But grant that trotting far from home,  
Has strangely chang'd him on the way.*

Now, Sir, to return to what is more for my present purpose. *Quintilian* takes notice in the beginning of the eleventh chapter, that old words, besides the authority of age, have the grace of novelty, when resumed again after some interval of disuse ; and therefore carry with them both a kind of antient majesty and new delight<sup>i</sup>.

BUT, that moderation must be had not to use them frequently, and be remarkable in them. Because nothing is more detestable than affectation. *Quia nihil est odiosius affectatione.* Nor must they be too obsolete, and brought down too far from the days of yore ; or such as are quite obliterated by time, and laid in oblivion, and scarce understood by the learnedest Antiquaries. However some antient words are consecrated by Religion, and it would be

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<sup>i</sup> Et auctoritatem antiquitatis habent ; & quia intermissa gratiam novitati similem parant.

almost heterodox or prophane, not to prefer them to others. *Sed illa mutari vetat Religio, & consecratis utendum est.* Yet perspicuity being the first quality of a perfect Style, how vicious must that be, which stands in need of an interpreter? Let this be then the rule, that of old words, the newest are the best, and of new ones the oldest<sup>k</sup>.

MUCH of the same moderation holds in authority. For tho' one might think him securely blameless, who takes words from great Authors, yet it is to be consider'd what they have establish'd, and not only what they have practis'd in those times<sup>l</sup>, but certainly would not, if they lived in these. *Quæ nec ipsi jam dicerent.*

As to custom, he gives an excellent caution (Chap. 12.) that it is to be consider'd, and well agreed on, what deserves that name. Because, says he, if that be called custom which most people do, it will prove a dangerous Rule, no less of words than of manners. For since when are men grown so good, that what is best is most universally liked? Hard drinking, for example, and other licentious practices,

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<sup>k</sup> Ergo novorum optima erunt maximè vetera; & veterum, maximè nova.

<sup>l</sup> Multùm refert non solum quid dixerint, sed etiam quid persuaserint.

are common; but so contrary to Reason, that they cannot deserve the name, or have the credit of custom. Accordingly, every corrupt way of expression, tho' commonly used, must not pass for an established custom. For the vulgar commonly speak the worst, and often applaud too, in the wrong place. Whence, in matter of expression the agreement of the learned, and in point of manners, the consent of the virtuous, is what alone should pass for custom<sup>m</sup>.

THIS caution, *Eudoxus*, I presume you will like the more, because so opposite to their cant, who ever talk of writing to the humour of the age; which will be often found no less viciated in writing, than rebellious, immoral, and irreligious in practice.

MY Author's remarks (Chap. 13<sup>th</sup>,) upon Orthography, and little grammatical Niceties, are something out of my way, except the conclusion; where he says, that altho' too much trifling in the matter is to be avoided, yet it is folly to pretend, that Accuracy in such minute points, is a clog to readiness and sharpness of wit, and sublimeness of expression. For tho' what he somewhere calls *molestissima diligentia per-*

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<sup>m</sup> *Consuetudinem sermonis vocabo consensum eruditorum; sicut vivendi, consensum bonorum.*



*versitas*, and what here he terms anxieties and mere cavilling, he owns may break or mince a genius, and work it into meanness<sup>n</sup>; yet he adds, that since *Cicero*, *Cæsar*, and *Messala* were so diligent in observing and recommending nicety in these minute matters, we must conclude they are to be taken in the way to learning, but not to take one up<sup>o</sup>.

I cannot but think it worth remarking from the following Chapter (14th,) that to raise the mind to a nobleness of thought, and sublimeness of expression, he recommends reading of *Heroick* verse: That *Tragedies* help, and *Lyricks* nourish the same: That from thence is drawn a grandeur of spirit and life, and the best tincture. Provided we take not only the noblest Authors, but the purest places. Lest in *Horace*, for example, and several of the *Greek* Authors, innocence and purity should be lost in searching elevation of thought<sup>p</sup>.

THEN he proceeds to observe, that the Antients, though they had more wit than art, *quanquam plerique plus ingenio quam*

<sup>n</sup> Nec ipse ad extremam usque anxietatem & cavillationes descendendum, atque in his ingenia concidi & comminui credo.

<sup>o</sup> Non obstant hæc disciplina per illas euntibus, sed circa illas hærentibus.

<sup>p</sup> Sublimitate Heroici carminis assurgat animus, & ex magnitudine rerum spiritum ducat, & optimis imbuatur, &c.

*arte valuerunt*, are the best models, and singularly useful in teaching the true gravity of words in their Tragedies, and the most genuine elegancy of them in their Comedies. Besides that the whole *Oeconomy* and management, is better, more reasonable,\* and more exact in them, than in most of the modern, who think there is no beauty nor strength of eloquence but in Sentences, in whatever work. *Qui omnium operum solam virtutem sententias putaverunt*. From those a kind of sacred and manly eloquence is to be had, while modern Authors are dissolved into all the luxuries of Rhetorick, and all the vices of a soft, effeminate licentiousness of Style, as of life<sup>a</sup>.

As we are not always equally in the same humour of writing down, even what we equally like in the Authors we read; so I was easy to persuade myself that from this place, till the 3<sup>d</sup> Chap. of the 2<sup>d</sup> Book, little or nothing occur'd proper to my present design. But here, I could not but reflect, that the same reasons he gives for setting young men immediately to the best masters, tho' others, less able, might seem more easy, and less apt to frighten with the ideas of too great a perfection, at the

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<sup>a</sup> *Quando nos in omnia deliciarum genera, vitiaque dicendi quoque genere defluximus.*

first entrance upon learning<sup>r</sup>, or more willing to condescend to the very first grounds; that the same reasons, I say, hold for aiming from the very first tryal, at the perfectest Style.

IN effect, I should think, as he says, it is not hard to evince how important it is to begin with the best, and how difficult it is to correct any of those vicious methods of writing, which are taken in the first tincture. For then a double labour will be necessary; one of learning the right, and the other, far harder, for unlearning the wrong<sup>r</sup>. To which purpose he tells, that *Timotheus*, a great master of Musick, required of such as came to his school after they had began in any other, double as great a salary as of those who had learnt nothing before of any one else.

AMONG other reasons to the same purpose, which I here omit (for it wou'd be much too long a work to mark all I find instructive in this excellent Author) he gives this; that the best are most natural and clear, which are the main qualities of eloquence. Whereas commonly those of less capacity, strive to look big; as the least

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<sup>r</sup> Cum mediocritas ad imitationem faciliior sit, & ad suscipiendas elementorum molestias minus superba.

<sup>r</sup> Geminatum onus & quidem deducendi gravius quàm docendi.



fellows are most for strutting and standing a tip-toe, and the weakest are most for threatening<sup>t</sup>. And I take it, says he, for a principle, that all vicious, swelling, jingling, tinkling expressions, proceed from weakness, not from strength of genius; as a bloated and swelling body argues an infirm, not a strong constitution. And then too, as those who leave the high road are apt to lose themselves, so the worst of Authors are soonest lost in the obscurity of wandering notions and singularity of turns<sup>u</sup>.

A GREAT allay to the apprehensions of too much severity in the Accuracy he requires from the first endeavours of Style, is what he delivers in several expressive comparisons in the 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter. Most of them are reduced to these. That requiring this early exactness must be so temper'd, as not to hinder the growth of a young genius by too much parcimony, or forcing it upon too strong and disagreeable food; the very way to keep it weak and meagre. Since perfection can neither be required nor expected from beginners; a fertile wit, a generous boldness of attempts, a sprightly, tho' less accurate conception, is preferable

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<sup>t</sup> *Ut statura breves in digitos eriguntur, & plura infirmi minantur.*

<sup>u</sup> *Ut corpora non robore sed valetudine inflantur; & recto itinere lapsi, plerumque divertunt. Erit ergo obscurior quo quisque deterior.*

to the dry, the sterile and the timorous slowness, which is not so much the presage of Accuracy, as the prognostick of a lasting Dullness. Too much fertility is not hard to be remedied, but sterility can never be conquer'd. Wherefore I think too great a dose of judgment in children, is the most unpromising sign of a good wit<sup>x</sup>. Where a youthful Style spreads too copiously at first, years and reason will polish it till it is brought to the just compass. But if the first ground is too small or too thin, your polishing and working upon it will only pierce it thro', and wear it away<sup>y</sup>. Dryness of Style is as bad for young wits, as an arid soil for young plants. And it is to be fear'd those who are too much for curbing the sallies of a youthful pen, mistake leanness for health, and weakness for judgment, and will make them both mean and desponding, by filling them with apprehensions, 'till they come to never venture at any thing, by fearing every thing<sup>z</sup>. Caution is however to be had with beginners, so to commend their wit, as not to deceive their judgment. *Et ingenio gaudebant, & non fallebantur judicio.*

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<sup>x</sup> Illa mihi in pueris natura minimum spei dabit, in qua ingenium judicio præsumitur.

<sup>y</sup> Si ab initio tenuem nimis laminam duxerimus, & quam calatura altior rumpat.

<sup>z</sup> Et quod maxime nocet, dum omnia timent, nihil conantur.

HERE again my pen stopt 'till the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> Chapter, which cast me into reflections upon the prejudices which lately inclined me to join with those who, as *Quintilian* says, would be apt to despise and ridicule his diligence in laying down the rules of art, contenting themselves with nature, and the vulgar methods of eloquence; and urging the authority of a great orator, who being ask'd what was such and such a figure of *Rhetorick*, answer'd, I know not; but if they are to the purpose, they are in my oration <sup>a</sup>.

To remove this common prejudice, he gives in the 13<sup>th</sup> Chapter, several reasons why such Authors as are either ignorant or contemners of rules, are generally thought the most witty. Among others, some are these: That most things are apt to seem stronger when rough, than when polish'd; and more numerous when loose, or spread at random, than when collected into order: That the affinity between some virtues and vices, makes rashness be easily mistaken for courage, and the prodigal for generous: That bold orators please by the fate of bold banterers, while men are apt to be most pleased to hear from others what they

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<sup>a</sup> *Nescire se quidem, sed si ad rem pertinerent, esse in sua declamatione.*



wou'd not venture to say by themselves<sup>b</sup>: (Where, by the by, if we are pleased with the danger they run, it is a greater argument of our malignity, than of their wisdom:) That it can hardly happen, but one who is always running too high, must now and then meet with something that is great: That often they gain the repute of wits by saying all that occurs, while accurate Authors are confined to choice: That, in fine, the least sparks appear with a remarkable distinction in the darkness of all things round; which was the comparison of *Tully* in the case<sup>c</sup>. He grants however, that one must own, the rigour of rules takes something away; but that it is like the file, which only takes off the dross and roughness, and polishes rather than lessens. *Eo solo minus est quod litteræ (or lituræ) perpolierunt, quo melius.*

UPON the whole, in writing, as in the delivery, the moderation and reserve which is most agreeable to every subject, and every prudent judge, is certainly preferable to those who in the pulpit bawl, or bellow every thing out with a world of bustling, puffing, stamping, thumping, and strange fury of agitation: Tho', as he farther observes, these tumultuous orators, who mis-

<sup>b</sup> *Libentissime homines audiunt quæ dicere ipsi noluiſſent.*

<sup>c</sup> *Ut lumina non inter umbras, quemadmodum Cicero ait, ſed plane inter tenebras clariora ſunt.*

take violence for strength (*hanc vim appellant, quæ est potius violentia*) often prevail much with the vulgar.

THAT one shou'd not hence conclude he carries the precepts of art to an extreme rigour, he sets its proper bounds in the following 14<sup>th</sup> Chapter. Immediately he observes, that it must not be thought all the common precepts of eloquence, must be observ'd alike in all occasions. A General cannot always follow the same uniform method of drawing up his army, ever in the same order of front and wings. It must change according to the nature of the place, the intercourse of rivers, the situation of woods, the falls and risings of the unequal ground, and the nature of the enemy and his attack. Sometimes he must even feign a flight<sup>d</sup>. 'Tis the same, says he, in Styles. For here too, sometimes you must seem to run from the ordinary engagement of Rules.

HE adds another comparison, drawn from the change of dress, garb, and air in pictures or statues; wherein nothing is less agreeable than an uniform stiffness of posture. *A summis ad ima rigens opus*. For variety of figures is what makes the beauty of *Oratory*, no less than of those

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<sup>d</sup> *Nonnunquam etiam terga dare, dissimulatâ fugâ, proderit.*

other arts<sup>c</sup>. But neither in these, nor in those, must any unnatural contorsion be allow'd.

THEN he farther warns you, that some things are always to be convey'd out of sight. The whole face, says he, is the main beauty of a picture. But *Apelles*, to hide the deformity of *Antigonus's* eye, painted him side-ways. Nor must that only be hid which ought not, but also what cannot be fully express'd. *Sive ostendi non debent, sive exprimi pro dignitate non possint*. Thus in the celebrated piece of *Iphigenia*, *Timantes* having express'd a deep grief in *Chalcas*, a deeper in *Ulysses*, and all that Art cou'd reach in *Menelaus*, the whole stretch of affections being now exhausted, *consumptis affectibus*, he cover'd her father's face with a veil, leaving to every one's thoughts to draw out, what the pencil could not do. Whereupon he infers, there is no tying one to universal, perpetual rules. That much less however, must young men think their business secure, when they have learnt some short book of eloquence, and the *Technical* parts of Rhetorick, as so many inviolable decrees. Since sometimes the straight road, other times the circuit is the better way : And when the fire obstructs

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<sup>c</sup> *Gratiam & delectationem afferunt figura, quaque in sensibus, quaque in verbis.*



the door, over the wall must be your passage. *Si Janua tenebitur incendio, per parietem exhibimus.*

CERTAINLY, Sir, you think I design a volume by following my Author at this particular rate. But to diminish your fears and my labour, I shall here fairly leap over the remainder of this second book, and the five following, wherein he descends chiefly to the particulars of Rhetorick, with reference to publick orators, in the causes of the Bar of those times. For tho' he has several things which might enter into my design, yet I thought they might be pass'd over, as sufficiently comprehended in the precedent, or the following remarks, which I begin from the 2<sup>d</sup> Chapter of the eighth Book.

HERE speaking of perspicuity, he tells you of a master of Rhetorick (perfectly like the man you spoke of, that admir'd the unintelligible preacher) and gives *Livy's* authority for it, that he used to repeat often to his scholars, to darken and obscure their Style; and wou'd frequently give this wonderful praise: *That indeed was excellent, for I my self cou'd not understand it.* And he takes notice it was grown the opinion of many, that he wrote the best, who stood  
most

most in need of an interpreter<sup>f</sup>. Where he gives the same reason which was mention'd from *Elizalde*, that some love obscure Authors for the pleasure of applauding their own wit, in taking all they understand in them, for their own meer invention. *Acumine suo delectantur, & gaudent non quasi audiverint, sed quasi invenerint*. But, says he, let us ever think the main beauty of discourse consists in being clear, in propriety of words, in their connatural order, in not drawing them on too long, and in which nothing is wanting, nothing superfluous, and such as consequently the illiterate will understand, and the learned approve<sup>g</sup>.

GIVE me leave, *Eudoxus*, to add, that I cannot but think appearing in publick in an obscure Style, is like making a visit in a mask, and ending it without being known. Such visits are rather affronts, than civilities; and such books are rather an injury, than a pleasure done to the publick. One that has no mind to be known, may stay at home, and be concealed without being impertinent. Let then the rule be *Quintilian's*, not only to write so that you may be understood, but so that you cannot be otherwise. *Quare non ut intelligere possit,*

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<sup>f</sup> *Ut id jam demum eleganter & exquisitè dictum putent, quod interpretandum sit.*

<sup>g</sup> *Ita sermo & doctis probabilis, & planus imperitis erit.*

*sed*

*sed ne omnino non possit non intelligere curandum est.*

THE next Chapter (3d,) of *Ornaments*, is very long in my Author. I shall abridge it into the following abstract.

THE true ornaments of discourse add to it's efficacy and strength. They bear away the attention and assent of the audience, and carry an irresistible approbation; while we easily believe what we hear with pleasure, and attend to with delight. And tho' meer flashy Styles are extremely vicious, yet there are some flashes which are to them what they are to thunder, which wou'd move us less, if besides the stroke, it astonish'd us not with the flash<sup>h</sup>.

BUT the ornaments must be manly, not effeminate; and let the colour be from the blood, not from paint. I wou'd not therefore have the finical, gimp Authors, think I am an enemy to the graces and beauties of Style: I do not deny but these must be had, but I deny they have them<sup>i</sup>. Nor will I think that is the best ground which bears flowers without fruit, or like better to have it all full of myrtles, and other pleasing trees, but void of the olive and the vine. If

<sup>h</sup> *Fulmina ipsa non tam nos confunderent, si vis eorum tantum, non etiam ipse fulgor timeretur.*

<sup>i</sup> *Non nego hanc esse virtutem, sed illis eam non tribuo.*



all were turn'd to pleasing gardens, we shou'd lose the pleasure even of the eye, in wanting the necessaries for life; and if all Eloquence were run into ornaments, Reason wou'd be no less to seek. More ground must be allow'd to corn, than flowers; and more room in Style, to solidity than to flourish. Olive-trees must be more numerous than myrtles: yet even those I will range into a method and order, which will be both pleasing and profitable. Thus they shall draw more equally the vital juice from the earth, and not entirely lose one part of it, while they exhaust another. *Ut terræ succum equaliter trahant.* I will lop my fruit-trees too, and thus they shall rise in a more pleasing shape, and a more vigorous, and fruitful growth. In a word, a compact Style, and bound in with rules, is both more graceful and more active: which *Quintilian* expresses here in a jockey comparison (which to one of your humour, must not be omitted) from horses, to whom the girths add both swiftness and grace. *Decentior equus cujus astricta sunt ilia, sed idem velocior.*

SOON after he proceeds to tell you, that altho' the ornaments of Style, chiefly consist in transfer'd terms; and the perspicuity of it, in proper words; yet we must know, nothing can be a true ornament which is

P                      improper.

improper<sup>k</sup>. But then of proper words, which are exactly or almost *synonymous*, some are more modest, or more sublime, or more smooth, or more lively, or more harmonious than others; and again by the different combinations, have more or less of these several qualities. The art then consists in distinguishing which are to be chosen. In fierce subjects, a harshness and severity of terms is most proper, and consequently most beautiful<sup>l</sup>. Where nothing of some such reason hinders, the most harmonious and sounding words are most ornamental; and as for dirty, base kind of terms, they must never have place in a polite Author. *Nec sordidis unquam in erudita oratione locus.*

THEN it must be remember'd, that what wou'd be magnificent in one place, wou'd be bombast in another. And so on the contrary, that will be in some occasions mean and low, which will be fit in others. Now a mean word in a noble discourse, is like a spot in a white robe; and a big term in an equal subject, is like a swelling in a smooth body. In some again, the discernment must be made by the senses rather than

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<sup>k</sup> *Sciamus inornatum esse quod est improprium.*

<sup>l</sup> *Rebus atrocibus verba etiam ipso auditu aspera magis convenient.*

by reason<sup>m</sup>. The examples he gives of this kind, may be perceptible in the *Latin*, but in *English* I fancy it will not be clear that to put a *Sow* instead of a *Hog* (even tho' the other were the newer word) can make any great difference in the elegance of a verse. It is more perceptible, what he says, that sometimes the very lowness of terms, makes the greatness of the thought be more conspicuous: *Vim rebus aliquando & ipsa verborum humilitas affert.*

NOT to be too long in the numerous other remarks of this chapter, I will be content with these few. That the greatest fault in eloquence, is to be injudiciously ornamental and witty<sup>n</sup>: Because while others are avoided, this is industriously sought for. That corrupt eloquence is chiefly in impropriety and redundancy of words, obscurity of expressions, finicalness of turns, and a childish playing with ambiguous and tinkling terms: That mixing sublime and mean, new and old, poetical and vulgar words, is as bad as taking them from foreign languages, and no less monstrous than what *Horace* describes in the beginning of his *Art of Poetry*: That comparisons being invented to illustrate matters, must be taken

<sup>m</sup> *Quedam non tam ratione quàm sensu judicantur: ut illud, cæsà jungebant fœdera porcâ.... porco vile erat.*

<sup>n</sup> *Omniū in eloquentiâ vitiorum pessimum. Nam cetera cum vitentur, hoc petitur.*



from known objects: (for, if you will let me add the comparison, you might otherwise as well pretend to enlighten a room by doubling the curtains :) That therefore Poets only, may take their comparisons from remote countries and objects, as *Virgil* does from *Lycia* and the river *Xanthus*: That another great fault of comparisons or similitudes (which otherwise make the Style sublime, florid, agreeable and admirable) is when they are used with too much licentiousness, particularly when false. Upon which account he disapproves this comparison, which he says was much admired in his youth; *As great rivers are navigable at their source, and vigorous trees bear as soon as they are planted, &c.*

IN the fifth Chapter, which is of sentences, after the usual caution of not running into many of them, or such as are plainly false, he declares those are the worst which consist in puns or false applications of ambiguous words°. Then, after some other things mentioned in our conferences, he takes notice that they naturally make a broken Style. They cut off the course of periods. Each sentence being a stop, each begins a new point, and can have no true

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° *Vitiosissimum quoties verborum ambiguitas cum rerum falsâ quâdam similitudine jungitur.*

connexion. There will be no structure or body of discourse, but a heap of loose and broken parts or bits. And moreover the whole complexion, as it were, of the Style, tho' otherwise clean, will seem full in a manner of spots and freckles<sup>p</sup>. He adds, these pretended lights are something like sparks of fire which intermix with the rising smoke, rather than a pure flame; and which appear not where the whole is bright and clear; as Stars are no more seen when the Sun is risen. He concludes, that altho' here and there they are graceful, yet of the two, 'tis better to have none, than too many; and that the roughness and plainness of the Antients in this kind, is preferable to the licentiousness of the Moderns<sup>q</sup>. But that there's a medium which we must aim at between both. Yet so that our first care be to avoid the excess, lest pretending to be better than those plain Authors, we should only be unlike them. *Prius tamen sit vitiis carere; ne dum volumus esse meliores veteribus, simus tantum dissimiles.*

THE sixth Chapter is of *Tropes*. He begins with *Metaphors*, which he calls the most frequent and beautiful of *Tropes*. We

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<sup>p</sup> Præter hoc etiam color ipse dicendi, quamlibet clarus, multis tamen ac velut variis maculis conspergitur.

<sup>q</sup> Et si necesse sit, veterem illum horrorem dicendi malim quam istam novam licentiam.

have been so particular upon this head, that I will only mention some few of his Remarks and Examples. As *First*, That the most sublime, but the most bold and dangerous, are when we give an expression of activity and life to things insensible of themselves. Thus, *Pontem indignatus Araxes*, is as if the River raged and foamed at the bridge it disdain'd to bear. *Secondly*, When they are moderate, and in their proper place, they illustrate the Style. But when frequent, they darken it, and grow tedious. *Thirdly*, That some are mean and sordid. Hence, tho' *Cicero* calls one the *Sink* of the Common-wealth, it will not be supportable to term others the piles and botches of the State. *Fourthly*, That it must either enter into a vacant place, or be more beautiful, or more significant, than the word whose place it takes. *Fifthly*, That rightly used they are a great supply to the indigence of language, and to the hard fate by which we seldom dare create new words, while many of the old are lost.

HE proceeds then to Exaggerations or *Hyperboles*: Which, says he, altho' they go beyond truth, they must not go beyond all bounds<sup>r</sup>. And that nothing leads more easily to false eloquence: that when exces-

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<sup>r</sup> *Ultra fidem, non tamen ultra modum.*



five, they cause laughter, which if seasonable, is call'd genteel pleasantry, otherwise it's term'd folly<sup>f</sup>. That this Trope is frequently used even by the most illiterate and common people, by that natural desire we have to make things greater than they are or lesser, being never content with them as they are in themselves. *Quod Natura est omnibus, augendi res vel minuendi cupiditas insita, nec quisquam vero contentus est.*

I hasten from hence to the third Chapter of the ninth Book, where he immediately observes, that all writing in his days, was become meer figure, if compared with the antient methods. *Penè jam quidquid loquimur figura est.* Whereas, says he, figurative expressions, when moderately used, give the Style as it were a sweeter relish, but by frequent use they lose even that of variety. Tho' some are so received, that they scarce bear the name of figures, and the ear is so used to them as hardly to remark their frequent occurring. Others more remote from vulgar use, and therefore commonly more noble, as they strike the ear by their novelty, so they easily cloy with their plenty<sup>t</sup>: especially when it is visible they were

<sup>f</sup> Si aptus est, urbanitatis: sin aliter, stultitia nomen assequitur.

<sup>t</sup> Ut novitate aurem excitant, ita copiâ satiant .... cum se ex omnibus latebris extractas, congestasque declarant.

not obvious to the Author, but sought for, and dragg'd out of hidden corners, and heap'd up with anxious care.

I must not omit, tho' I omit many others, his remark upon puns. He declares them to be generally pitiful even in Jest. *Quod etiam in jocis frigidum.* And as for what is often near a-kin to them, that is, playing with likeness of sounds, or reciprocation of words, or circling of expressions round into the same terms, or whatever you please to call it; he gives several examples, proper to the *Latin* tongue. One however, with a little change, will shew the nature of them in *English*. Thus it might be said of a Glutton, that *he rather lives to eat, than eats to live.* But certainly it is clear, that even those who like such turns the most, shou'd grant they are putid, and childish, when frequent or affected, or forced; especially in serious matters.

To go through the forty or fifty more different kinds of Figures he there sets down, and pursue them in this manner, would be too long a work. Let these few touches suffice.

As in reciting, change of voice, casts of the eye, variety of gesture, are a mighty grace when rightly manag'd; but to exceed in bawling, screaming, whining, staring about,

about, is extremely ridiculous; so those figurative turns of expression, are no less detestably absurd, when they pass the just bounds. A Style has it's right and proper kind of aspect, which as it must not be of a fixt sort of dulness and unchangeable stupidity, so commonly the natural look must be maintain'd<sup>u</sup>.

HE concludes, the greatest part of Figures are only to have place where the main business is to please and delight. For when the subject requires a kind of fierceness, or *Atrocity*, and where envy or commiseration are to be rais'd, who will bear with the impertinent Author that will be angry or weep in *Antitheses*, or in reciprocal and tinkling phrases? In these occasions a visible care of the words makes the passion less credible; and where art is remarkable, we presently conclude there is little of real truth. And with these words he ends that Chapter.

THE next (4th Chapter) which he *intitles* of *Composition*, begins with a point which will clear the true notion of *Nature* in writing, and answer the general argument of *Antiregular* Authors. For thus we may call those who either decry all re-

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<sup>u</sup> Et oratio habet rectam quandam veluti faciem: qua ut stupere ~~non~~ immobili rigore non debet, &c.



strictions of art and rule, or at least will follow none.

HE first declares, he would not presume to write of *Composition* after *Tully*, who seems to have been more industriously accurate in this than in any other part of eloquence, unless some had even then been bold to write to *Cicero* himself, that they disapprov'd the whole method of ranging words and expressions.

NOR am I ignorant, says he, that now, many reject all care of this matter, pretending the horrid kind of Style, such as first flows to the pen, is more natural and manly<sup>w</sup>. But if they mean nature as yet unpolish'd by experience, reflection, and instruction, the whole art of Rhetorick must be laid aside, and be no more. For in the first ages men spoke not by rules, or by that accuracy and care which is now used to prepare the audience, by *Exordiums*, by entering with insinuations, by plausible proposals of the subject, artful placing of the arguments, and raising affections. But if nothing could be better than those artless doings, we should not change their huts for houses, their skins for clothes, nor woods and mountains for cities. At first what arts

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<sup>w</sup> *Horridum illum sermonem ut fortè effluxerit, modò magis naturalem modò etiam magis virilem contendunt.*

were found? What is there that time has not polish'd and improv'd? Why do we prune our vines, or weed our ground? Those are the products of nature. *Terra & hæc generat.* Shall we tame animals? Nature made them wild. *Mansuefacimus animalia? Indomita nascuntur.*

BUT if the matter be rightly weigh'd, we shall find, that is most natural which nature best admits \*. And then, as those rivers flow with greater force, which roll along in a well-cut channel, than where rocks and unequal banks oppose their course; so much does a connected Style, rolling with its united forces, surpass the noisy, broken eloquence. And why shou'd they think that art hinders strength? Does not address in flinging the Javelin, make it fly as with more grace, so with greater force? Are there not certain motions and steps, without which no defence or attack is sufficiently secure in the ring or field †?

HENCE most able men have always judg'd accurate Composition to be of great consequence, not only to please, but to move and to persuade the mind. First, because nothing enters the mind, which stum-

\* *Verum id est maximè naturale quod natura optimè patitur.*

† *In certamine armorum & omni palestrâ, quid satis rectè cavetur & petitur, cui non artifex motus & certi quidam pedes adsint.*

bles as it were at the door, which is the ear. *Quod in aure velut quodam vestibulo statim offendit.* Then, because we have a natural inclination to measure, proportion, and harmony. *Quod naturâ ducimur ad modos.* Otherwise musical instruments which express no words, could raise no different passions. Now if there is a secret force in numbers and sounds, it is no where greater than in a discourse. Nor is it much less important what turn or fall of words you have in the cadence of your Style, than what propriety and strength of terms you give to the sense and thought<sup>z</sup> In fine, take any thing which you think a vehement, or sweet, or beautiful piece of eloquence, shuffle it into another turn, dissolve and disorder the parts, you will see the strength, the sweetness and the beauty will be lost. Nay, the finer and brighter the words and sentiments are, the greater will be the deformity when the composure is disorder'd; for the ill placing of things, will appear more by the very light of the words. *Quia negligentia collocationis, ipsâ verborum luce deprehenditur.*

SOMEWHAT after, he proceeds to observe, that a difference of composure must

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<sup>z</sup> *Quantum interest sensus idem quibus verbis efferatur, tantum verba eadem quâ compositione vel in exitu jungantur, vel sine claudantur.*



be in oratory, and other writings. In that, the method of the Elocution must have its proper stops, framed to the delivery. Whereas History carries on the reader by the course of the transactions. Yet even letters and familiar discourses, must be pen'd with their set numbers ; and if they flow not with the connected majesty of orations, wherein each word and sentence is drawn smoothly from another, yet they must be free from yawning, as it were, and gaping of the words ; which even there must fill their true space and measure ; and they must be confin'd to a looser chain, 'tis true, but yet to a chain <sup>a</sup>.

THE three great requisites in composition, are order, connexion, and number. *Ordo, Junctura, Numerus*. In the order, it is a great matter not to clap a weaker, close upon a stronger term ; which would make the discourse fall, whereas it ought to rise. Nay, even commonly the order of nature is to be observed ; and accordingly we are rather to say, men and women, east and west, day and night, than to turn them backwards. Yet neither this, nor the order of time, must be superstitiously observed. Especially since the framing of a Style is like building, where not always the stone

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<sup>a</sup> *Ut potius laxiora in his vincula, quàm nulla sint.*

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which lies nearest at hand, is to be first placed, but that which will lie more close and smooth. Tho' the happiest structure of Style is where the right order, and connexion, and harmony of the words, fall in the most naturally with the thought <sup>b</sup>.

AMONG other faults of ill-join'd words, we must carefully avoid, such as jar by the harshness of the consonants, or yawn too wide, or cut too close upon one another by the concourse of vowels. However it is hard to say, whether too great negligence, or that solicitude is worse, by which every defect of this nature is dreaded as a mighty crime. Nay, *Tully* takes notice that a kind of negligence in this point, is pleasing, by the idea it gives, of a man who is more attentive upon his matter, than upon his words <sup>c</sup>.

As for the numbers, they cannot bear in *English* the same exactness as in *Latin*; not being determin'd by the same measure and quantity. Yet they have their proper harmony, which is not to be neglected. Tho' we may say with our Author, it's better to use harsh than insignificant words. Then, as he farther says, this harmony is

<sup>b</sup> Cui & rectus ordo & apta junctura, & cum his numerus opportunè cadens contingit.

<sup>c</sup> Indicat non ingratam negligentiam de re hominis magis quàm de verbis laborantis.

most desir'd and most perceptible at the end of periods<sup>a</sup>. For each sentence has its proper end, or stop and interval ; and when now the ear has follow'd on the track or course, and as it were been carried on with the stream of your Style, it judges more sedately of it where its impetuosity stops, and gives time for a reflection. And certainly what is design'd for resting as it were, and breathing, is not to be hard and abrupt. But of all faults of this kind, versifying and rhyming cadences in prose, are the very worst<sup>b</sup>.

AGAIN, let it be remember'd that this whole business is so to be taken, that the Style which in the very writing shou'd be carried fluently on, grow not cold and dull by too solicitous and wretched a care of the numbers, which, according to *Lucilius*, wou'd turn compounding into a checker-work, and inlaying of words. And then, so it is, that, as in versifying, practice brings and shews the right quantities and number of the feet, at a view, without the trouble of scanning ; so it will, by degrees, give the true harmony of prose. Wherein moreover the learned understand the art, and the unlearned the pleasure, tho' some things in it cannot

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<sup>a</sup> *Magis tamen & desideratur in clausulis & apparet.*

<sup>b</sup> *Versum in oratione fieri, multo foedissimum est.*



be reduced to rules <sup>f</sup>. Advice must then be taken from the occasion and subject, and the judgment of the ear must decide in many turns, where I shall perceive what is best, tho' unable perhaps to tell you why. *Rationem fortasse non reddam, sentiam esse melius.* But in fine, this is certain, that where the subject is sublime, the words must have a noble pace; in the mild, they must be carried smoothly, and be equally spread; in the lively and brisk, they must run; and in the nice and delicate, they must flow <sup>g</sup>. Even, where necessity will have it, they must swell. Upon the whole; I had rather have a rough, than an effeminate composure, such as now-a-days is so common, and we daily soften more into all the looseness of a dancing Style. *Et quotidie magis lascivimus, Sybaritatum modo saltitantes.* Above all, the suspicion of affecting numbers, is to be avoided. For one that is found in this solicitous way of pleasing, will neither move nor please. Nor can the reader or hearer believe him, or enter into the passions with an Author that seems to be angry or sorry, by study and at his leisure <sup>h</sup>.

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<sup>f</sup> Doctrinationem componendi intelligunt, indocti voluptatem. Quadam verò arte tradi non possunt.

<sup>g</sup> Debent sublimia ingredi, lenia duci, acria currere, delicata fluere.

<sup>h</sup> Nec potest ei credere, aut propter eum dolere, aut irasci fudex, cui hoc putat vacare.

AT the beginning of the next Book (*lib. 10. cap. 1.*) after some discourse upon *Copiousness of words*, which some, by a childish and wretched care, think is to be gain'd by making a collection of *synonymous* terms and phrases, whereof they take upon occasions not the best, but the first which occur; he shews that without diligent reading of the best Authors, it cannot be attain'd. Then he advises not to mistake in taking every thing for good which is said by a good Author. Since the very best sometimes slip, or are tired with the care of being exact, or indulge to the facility and pleasure of their wit and humour; and *Cicero* thinks he has found *Demosthenes* asleep, and *Horace* that he has caught even *Homer* nodding. For in fine, tho' they are great men, yet still they are men<sup>i</sup>. And it happens that those who will take every thing for law which they find in such Authors, imitate commonly what is worst (as that is commonly the easiest to be done) and think themselves like great men, when they have attain'd their faults<sup>k</sup>. Let great reserve be however used in censuring eminent Authors, lest, as it generally happens, we condemn what we do not understand. And of the

<sup>i</sup> *Summi enim sunt homines, sed homines tamen.*

<sup>k</sup> *Ac se abunde similes putant, si vitia magnorum consequantur.*

two, 'tis better to approve all they say, than to disapprove too much. *Omnia eorum legentibus placere, quàm multa displicere maverim.*

Now as for the Authors proper to be read, *Theophrastus* thinks Poets are a great help. And many, with a great deal of reason go into his opinion. For in them you learn the sprightliness of thought, sublimeness of terms, life of passions and affections, brightness of images, beauty of representations ; and that roughness of wit which is contracted by the moroseness of other studies, is smooth'd and soften'd by the vein of *Poetry*, and blandishments of the *Muses*. Wherefore *Cicero* advises those who aim at eloquence, to rest from time to time, and repose in the reading of *Poets* <sup>1</sup>.

YET they are not to be follow'd in all things. Not in the liberty of their words, nor in the licence of their figures. Their whole endeavour turning most to ostentation and pleasure, they feign, not only false, but incredible things, with a kind of exemption and privilege, while we pardon them, and even approve their walking those by-ways, because the necessity of rhyme or

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<sup>1</sup> *Ideoque in hac lectione Cicero requiescendum putat.*



feet, forces them to leave the high road of truth <sup>m</sup>.

THE characters he then gives of many different Authors, seem to me so finely touch'd, and are so numerous, that I shall pass them over, and only mention the nice commendation he gives to *Germanicus* and to *Julius Cæsar*, where he says, that in the works of this, it appears he writ with the same spirit as he fought; and of the other, after having named some eminent Poets, he adds, these I have named because the care of the universe has drawn *Germanicus* from these studies, and the Gods thought it little for him to be the best of Poets.

FROM these characters of Authors, he passes in the next Chapter (2d,) to some precepts of *Imitation*. Particularly that we should aim at the best, but not servilely following one only Author. Both because there's no coming up equal to one whose footsteps you only pretend to trace, (for certainly he that always follows, will always be behind) and no one has all that can be desired; and moreover because 'tis easier to excel than to be exactly like <sup>n</sup>. Besides that it is mean, and as it were sluggish to stop at

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<sup>m</sup> *Depulsi à rectâ viâ, necessario ad eloquendi quadam diverticula confugiunt.*

<sup>n</sup> *Plerumque facilius est plus facere quàm idem.*

former inventions. If the Antients had been content with imitation, as the first had nothing to imitate, the latter wou'd have nothing to invent. Since then they have given us an example of inventing, we must invent if we pretend to imitate.

BUT then too, let every one examine his strength, lest he aim too high, or stop too low for the true reach of his wit. For some things are either too strong, or too different from one man's genius, which are natural to another's, and therefore, inimitable to him. An easy wit, by aiming at the *Sublime*, will lose its own charms, and fail of those. An elevated genius on the contrary, by striving to be smooth and delicate, will lose its own majesty without falling into the elegance of the other °.

BUT the greatest, and yet the common mistake in this, is still imitating the same Style in all different subjects, whereas each has its proper beauty and rules. Some require lenity and smoothness of expressions; others grandeur and sublimeness of turn; this a rapidity and impetuosity of Speech; and that a calm and artless air. And then to move, to persuade, and to explain, have each their peculiar way.

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° *Vim suam perdat & elegantiam quam cupit non assequatur.*

FREQUENT exercise of writing, whereof he treats in the next Chapter (3d,) is what he assures us *Cicero* had reason to say, does above all things teach and make eloquence. Then he gives upon it these following precepts. Write diligently tho' you write but slow<sup>p</sup>. Seek for the best, without fondly embracing what first occurs. Examine all you invent, and range all you approve. Make a choice of thoughts and words, and ponder the full weight of each. Give them their true rank. Cast the numbers to and fro into several turns, till they settle right to one another; and let them not take place at a venture just as they come. To this effect you must often read over what you wrote immediately before. Thus you will make a closer connection, and the heat of first thoughts cooling by this stop of the pen, you will take new force, and recover new vigour. 'Tis like going back to take a farther jump, or drawing back the arm to give the bow a stronger bent. Yet, when the wind favours, spread all the sails<sup>q</sup>; but with care not be driven too far, or be over-born by yielding too much to a gust, or being too credulous to the weather. All our

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<sup>p</sup> *Sit primò vel tardus, dum diligens stylus.*

<sup>q</sup> *Interim tamen si fuerit flatus, danda sunt vela, dum nos indulgentia illa non fallat.*



thoughts please us at their birth. Else we shou'd not even write them down. We must therefore call them to an exact review, and question the suspicious facility, and running of the pen. This diligence and demurring, is absolutely necessary in the beginning, and it must be taken for a principle, that we must absolutely gain this point, of writing at first with the most accurate care. Custom will draw on facility; thoughts will present themselves, words will naturally occur, the harmonious ranging of them will follow, and every thing, in fine, as in a well-order'd family, will readily come to its proper duty at a call. This is then the great principle and sum of all: Writing well is never learnt by writing fast, but writing fast is attain'd by writing well<sup>r</sup>.

ON the other side, those who have gain'd something of a settled strength of Style, are not to be tied to the wretched solicitude of morosely cavilling at themselves. Some never think they have been anxious enough, but are still for changing every thing, and still changing it again, as if all that occur'd were certainly the wrong, and the right were always to be sought, but never found. Incredulous and ever unjust to their wit,

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\* *Cito scribendo non fit ut bene scribatur. Bene scribendo fit ut cito.*

they mistake increase of difficulty for the accuracy of writing<sup>f</sup>. Nor is it easy to determine whether those mistake most, who like every thing, or those who approve of nothing of their own. Whence oftentimes ingenious young men, spending themselves in the endless labour, write nothing while they will always be writing better. Study, but not indignation, will make you improve. Meaning by study, not meer staring up at the ceiling, or a murmuring over some imperfect thoughts, or gaping with expectation of what will come; but considering the nature of the subject, and examining in a human way, as in other affairs, what every circumstance of person, time and place may require. Thus nature will teach how to enter upon the matter, how to follow it on. For most things are fixt and certain by nature, and are presently seen unless we shut our eyes. Hence not even the illiterate are long a seeking where to begin. It would consequently be the more shame that Art and Learning shou'd make it hard<sup>g</sup>.

THO' I fear I have already trespass'd too long upon your Patience, yet, *Eudoxus*,

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<sup>f</sup> *Increduli quidam & de ingenio suo pessimè meriti, qui diligentiam putant, facere sibi scribendi difficultatem.*

<sup>g</sup> *Quo magis pudendum est si difficultatem facit doctrina.*

since my hand is in, I shou'd certainly have given you the trouble of some farther remarks upon the remainder of this 10th, and the other two last Books of our Author; but that the bearer being to set out to-morrow morning, and night advancing, I must make an end.

YET I cannot end, till, upon second thoughts, I endeavour to give you the character of *Seneca's* writings, from the first chapter, already spoken of, where (in the tenth Book) he gives his opinion of so many others. I believe you will pardon my endeavouring at it (tho' I am sensible I shall not reach it's expressiveness in *English*) because I imagine it comprizes your opinion of *Callicrates's* book, excepting one or two little touches which your justice and civility will not let you apply to him.

I have purposely, says *Quintilian*, defer'd 'till now to speak of *Seneca*, upon account of a false opinion that runs of me, as if I condemn'd his Style with something even of an envious censure: which I take to have happened by my endeavouring to correct a vicious sort of Eloquence, by requiring a more judicious Accuracy, at a time when he was almost alone in the hands of our young men. Nor did I pretend



tend to strike him out of their hands, but I was by no means for having him prefer'd to those Antients with whom he continually made very bold, while conscious of his own difference of Style, he easily saw it could not long maintain its vogue, if those others were approved<sup>u</sup>. Nor yet was he imitated by his admirers, who fell as short of him as he of those others. It were to be wished they could be either equal or like to him: But they only took to his faults, and disgraced him by pretending they wrote like him. He had certainly great beauties, with a fertile wit, many bright sentences, a great deal of literature, and tho' no profound philosopher, yet a great opposer of vice, in whom many things deserve to be read for their morality. Tho' his Style was certainly faulty, and full of those faults which were the more pernicious because sweet and pleasing<sup>x</sup>. Methinks it might be wish'd he had used his own wit in writing, but another's judgment. *Velles eum suo ingenio dixisse, alieno judicio*. For if he had not condemn'd all natural expressions, if he had not stretch'd them too high, if he had not affected a singularity of Phrase, and weaken'd the importance of his sub-

<sup>u</sup> *Cum diversi sibi conscius generis, placere sibi posse iis quibus illi placerent, diffideret.*

<sup>x</sup> *In eloquendo corrupta pleraque, & eo perniciosissima, quod abundabant dulcibus vitiis.*

jects by the levity of his turns, he wou'd be now commended by the common voice, not of the young, but of the learned and prudent. But even as it is, by such as have already taken a settled and sounder method of Style, he may be read with the particular advantage of exercising their discernment between true and false eloquence<sup>y</sup>. For he has many things which may not only be approved, but admired; let only due care be taken to pick and chuse, as it were to be wished he himself had done. For it is a pity that a genius like his, did not do otherwise, since he was capable of doing what he pleas'd. *Digna enim fuit illa natura, quæ meliora vellet, quæ quod voluit effecit.*

WITH these words my Author ends that Chapter, and I my Remarks. I have only time to add, that if you think fit to send them to *Cleander*, I desire you, Sir, to urge him to give as good a proof of his conversion from some other principles, as I have given you here of mine from former Ideas of Rule and Accuracy, to the *Orthodoxy of Eloquence*, if you will allow me that expression. At my return, we will enter, if you please, into discourse of our differences in Philosophy. In the

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<sup>y</sup> *Vel ideo quod exercere potest utrumque judicium.*

mean while, *Eudoxus*, I can assure you  
no difference of opinions can lessen the  
respect and esteem with which I shall ever  
be,

*Sir,*

*Your most Obedient*

*Humble Servant,*

J. C.





*Advertisement.*

I HAVE been urged to join to these papers, some others, which I wrote about a year after, at the like broken intervals of very different studies. Especially I was urged to add two letters upon *Accuracy of Conversation*, and one of some other Remarks upon the same book of *Callicrates*, with a particular reference to the Philosophical Principles he there advances. But these letters being about as much as the Dialogues, I was unwilling to double my labour in writing them for the Press, out of my loose papers at this time. If these present papers meet with a favourable reception, I may more securely venture to let some other such pieces follow upon the encouragement. If they are disapprov'd, my fault will be much lessen'd. Besides that many are always for little books, being possess'd with an old Proverb, *Magnus liber, magnum malum*, that a great Book is a great Evil. In the mean while, to satisfy those who may have a mind to know in a more familiar manner the true date and occasion of these present Dialogues, I wou'd not refuse to add the following letter, which chanced, I know not how, to fall into the hands of several, a little after.

Eudoxus

Eudoxus *Cleandro*, S. D.

**A**CCLINATA jam dies erat, cum præcipiti ad finem Augusto mense, quod facile, ut opinor, memineris, ad Mosæ ripam deambularem. Tum quum nos inopinatus imber, egregiè perplutos, domum coëgit. Itaque interruptus est nobis sermo ille quem jucundissimè miscebamus. Nec per tuum hinc maturatum in Flandriam discessum, colloqui mihi tecum ex eo tempore licuit. Cui meo fato, si indoluissè me negem, judicent sapientes rectene fecerim, ut ait ille, sed certè mentiar. Nam & sæpè mihi recurfat animo suavissimæ consuetudinis nostræ memoria, & subit animum ea frequens cogitatio, ecquid in hoc locorum divortio, usurpari ea aliquatenus nequeat. Parum mihi visum est litterarum illud dulce commercium quod communi amicitiae debito rependitur. Amplius quidpiam, quodque nostrum colloquendi modum propius referret, planè cupiebam. Quoties itaque per studia licebat, quandam Dialogi speciem meditabar. Tum verò multa occurrebant quæ ego Tibi, & Tu vicissim mihi dicturus viderere. Et cœpi paulatim aliqua, rerum istarum in chartas conjicere. Nosti enim meum scribendi morem, seu memoriam, tædiumque levare volo, seu stylum exercere. Namque, ut ait *Horatius*,

*Ubi*

*Ubi quid datur otii*

*Illudo chartis. Est hoc mediocribus illis,  
Ex vitiis unum, cui si concedere nolis, &c.*

Hinc nata est hæc, quam ad te mitto, *de optimo scribendi genere* Dissertatio. Eum enim sermonem prosequor quem iniquus ille nobis imber excussit. Nullus dubito quin tu ipse meliora fuisses dicturus quàm quæ hisce Dialogis differentem te leges. Quod si ego a te dissensero, erit ea tota dissensio ejusmodi; ut nec vitari pro summâ humani judicii varietate possit, adeoque nec quidquam peccet in amicitia jura. Tertium audies in quatuor postremis Dialogis differentem *Critomachum*. Illum quidem probè Tibi notum & charum; sed qui nobis, quum hæc olim agitaremus, non aderat. Non quod Tui solius suavissima confabulatio, meum haud expleret animum, sed quod revera mihi postea contigerit multum cum illo, hæc super re, habere sermonem; sintque aliqua ab illo dicta, quæ & dici meritò poterant ad hanc illustrandam materiam, & Tibi tribuenda non erant, quia à Tuo quidem genio aliena. Tu qui soles *meas esse aliquid putare nugas*, scito me his ad te scriptis hoc agere, quod de se *Tullius* ad *Varronem* scribit, quum ad eum mittit *Academicarum Quaestionum* Libros, *ut conjunctionem studiorum amorisque nostri, quo possem litterarum genere declararem.*

Vale.

Kal. Febr. 1702.



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## F I N I S.



## E R R A T A.

PAG. 75. lin. 5. for *desperate* read *disparate*,  
 or *unconnected*. Pag. 193. lin. 4. for *aliqui*,  
 read *aliquid*.

